R 8825-5.1F 8/88

THE PUBLIC, THE SOVIETS, AND NUCLEAR ARMS

PUBLIC
SUMMIT '88

A JOINT PROJECT OF THE PUBLIC AGENDA FOUNDATION AND
THE CENTER FOR FOREIGN POLICY DEVELOPMENT AT BROWN UNIVERSITY

U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS IN THE YEAR 2010:

Americans Look to the Future

A Report of The Public Agenda Foundation and
The Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University

Copyright 1988 by the Public Agenda Foundation,
and the Center for Foreign Policy Development

All rights reserved including the rights
to reproduce this book or portions thereof
in any form.

For reprint information contact either:
The Public Agenda Foundation
6 East 39th Street
New York, N.Y. 10016

OR:

The Center for Foreign Policy Development
P.O. Box 1948
Providence, Rhode Island 02912

U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS IN THE YEAR 2010:

Americans Look to the Future

A report of the Public Agenda Foundation and
the Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University

By John Doble
Vice President
The Public Agenda Foundation

In Consultation With

Richard Smoke
Director of Research
Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University

AND

Jean Johnson
Vice President and Director of Programs
The Public Agenda Foundation

Public Summit '88 is a nonpartisan education
and communications project designed to help
Americans understand the choices that our
country faces in areas of U.S.-Soviet relations
and nuclear arms.

This project was co-sponsored by:
The Public Agenda Foundation
and
Brown University's Center for Foreign Policy Development.

THE PUBLIC AGENDA FOUNDATION

The Public Agenda Foundation is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research and education organization, founded in 1975 by former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and public opinion analyst Daniel Yankelovich. Public Agenda works with media and other organizations to develop innovative ways of presenting complex issues to the public.

The Foundation has three types of programs, each designed to bring leadership, media and community groups together in a dialogue that heightens awareness about issues of national and local concern. In media-based public education campaigns, Public Agenda has worked with the media to stimulate open and constructive public debate on choices communities face on critical issues.

Each year, Public Agenda frames three topics for National Issues Forums in a set of issue books, setting down alternatives facing the American people - and their costs - and they are presented in hundreds of public gatherings where citizens can "work through" their different opinions to reach common ground.

Finally, independent research projects are undertaken to understand not only what people think about complex issues, but why they think it: these projects use a variety of research techniques renging from focused group discussions to full-scale national opinion studies.

THE CENTER FOR FOREIGN POLICY STUDIES

The Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, is a nonprofit organization established in 1981 on the initiative of Thomas J. Watson, Jr., former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union and Chairman Emeritus of IBM Corporation. Its mandate is to engage in research on U.S. policy for dealing with the Soviet Union and related weapons issues.

The Center brings together scholars, practitioners, and politicians and the public in a search for policy choices that can lead to consensus on the best way to reduce the risk of nuclear war while defending basic American values and interests.

The Center is separately incorporated but affiliated with Brown University and its newly-established Institute for International Studies. It is funded by grants from private individuals and foundations.

PROJECT FUNDERS

Funding for The Public, The Soviets, and Nuclear Arms has been provided by the following institutions:

The Bohen Foundation

The Carnegie Corporation

The Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation

The George Gund Foundation

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

The Charles F. Kettering Foundation

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

The James C. Penney Foundation, Inc.

The Veatch Program

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report is only one publication of a project that covered three years and involved numerous phases and aspects. The work described in this study is, therefore, the result of the efforts of many people, and reflects their insights, intelligence, dedication, and hard work.

The project was a true collaboration of the Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University and the Public Agenda Foundation. Mark Garrison, the Center's Director, and Jan Kalicki, the Executive Director, were instrumental in conceptualizing and executing every aspect of the project, in reviewing all project materials, and coordinating the project's work with experts in the U.S. and overseas, and with the project's Executive Committee and National Council. Mark and Jan brought to the project a rare ability to bridge the gap between the experts and the American people, and we learned much from them. We would also like to thank their associates at the Brown Center who gave their clear thinking and hard work to the project.

Richard Smoke deserves special mention. As the Brown Center's Research Director, Richard worked (literally) thousands of hours on every phase of the effort. His expertise, his clarity, his patience, and his sincere interest in the public touched every aspect of this project. His colleagues and associates are also grateful for his wisdom, wit, and grace under pressure.

As Campaign Director for Public Summit '88, Kate Sheaffer turned an idea into reality. Kate, along with Kim Edmonds, the Campaign Media Director, demonstrated tireless effort, initiative, and enterprise in working with local staff, city officials and project cosponsors in Baltimore, Nashville, San Antonio and Seattle to conduct a citizen education effort without precedent in scope and achievement. More than 76,000 citizens took part in Public Summit '88. We offer our admiration and congratulations to Kate and Kim, and our thanks to the entire Public Summit staff and media co-sponsors, for an effort that captured an astonishing level of public interest and attention. Given the complexity (and even intimidating nature) of the issue of U.S.-Soviet relations, their challenge could hardly have been greater.

Jeffrey Tuchman, the Public Agenda's Media Director, co-authored the film describing the four futures and, Julie Lewis and the rest of his crew at the Public Agenda, produced television spots for the Public Summit '88 campaigns that were remarkable for their ability to engage people and help citizens understand this issue with clarity and force.

Project Director Tony Wagner's overall guidance, enthusiasm, commitment (and tireless travel) on behalf of the effort were invaluable. His eloquence and ability to explain every aspect of the project laid the groundwork for its success. The support he generated for the effort among foundations and sponsors across the country enabled the project to exceed its goals.

John Immerwahr, a Senior Fellow at the Public Agenda and a professor at Villanova University, also deserves our special thanks. While John conducted and analyzed much of the research leading up to the final study, and was responsible (along with the Villanova University Human Organization Science Institute) for recruiting and training the moderators who worked in the panels, his greatest contribution was bringing his insight, critical intelligence, and uncommonly good common sense to every serious problem and impass the project faced.

Robert J. Kingston, Senior Advisor to the Charles F. Kettering Foundation and the Public Agenda's "Professor Emeritus" was also an invaluable contributor to the entire effort from its inception. His efforts were especially significant in shaping the project in its earliest stages, including the the conceptualization and development of the four futures and, prior to that, the community leadership workshops and two-years worth of public opinion research leading up to this final study.

On a personal note, the authors would like to thank Deborah Wadsworth, the Public Agenda's Executive Director, for her leadership, direction and moral support (not to mention crisis management).

We would also like to acknowledge and compliment the work of our research assistants, Judith Kallick and Stephen Immerwahr, for the long hours and thoughtful work they put into this report and its companion volumes, and Sarah Hamilton for the special care she put into the layout and production of this report. And we thank them for maintaining their sense of humor throughout.

Finally, on behalf of the entire project staff, we would like to thank the distinguished Americans who served on the project's National Council and Executive Committee: Douglas Dillon, William J. Hyland, Amos A. Jordan, Walter E. Massey, David Mathews, Charles McC. Mathias, General Edward C. Meyer, Alice M. Rivlin, Thomas J. Watson, Jr.

Special thanks goes to three members of the Executive Committee: to Howard Swearer, President of Brown University for his commitment to citizen (as well as student) education, and his insight in matching the special capabilities of the Brown Center to those of the Public Agenda; to Cyrus Vance, the Public Agenda's Chairman, for believing in this project and giving so much time and effort to bring it to the attention of the nation's leaders; and to Daniel Yankelovich, the Public Agenda's President, for the vision that inspired this endeavor and his boundless faith in the American people.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

Summary of Findings

Chapter One: The Public's Starting Point

Chapter Two: The Public Weighs Four Futures

1. The need for a new methodology
2. Rating the four futures
3. Cooperative problem solving
4. Eliminate the nuclear risk; compete otherwise
5. The U.S. gains the upper hand
6. Defend only North America

Chapter Three: The Public's Judgment

1. Shifts in the public's thinking
2. The public's composite future
3. Summary

Appendix I

PREFACE

Following General Secretary Gorbachev's visit to the United States, and accompanying the Senate debate on the INF Treaty and the heightened debate on U.S.-Soviet relations that emerges in any Presidential election year, a series of indepth and highly informative studies of American public opinion have been conducted. Surveys from the nation's leading opinion researchers have asked Americans whether they believe Mr. Gorbachev is different from other Soviet leaders, whether they think "glasnost" is real, whether they support the INF Treaty, the building of SDI, aid to the anti-communist Nicaraguan Contras, and so on. These studies provide a valuable profile of what Americans are thinking about the Soviets in this pivotal year.

The study whose results are described here had a different aim -- to discover what kind of relationship Americans want the country to have with Soviets over the next two decades, to the year 2010. It is unique in several respects. Instead of focusing on opinions on current issues, it looks at the public's underlying values -- the rationales and beliefs that the public employs in forming opinions. Secondly, the study used new techniques that encouraged the public to weigh the pros and cons of various alternatives -- to confront the costs and benefits associated with different paths that U.S. policy might take. Thirdly, it focused on long-term directions, inviting the public to debate and decide where policy should head over a span of two decades.

Conducted by the Public Agenda Foundation and the Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University, the study asked 963 average Americans to think about four alternative futures for U.S.-Soviet relations. And it asked them, in choosing among the alternatives, to weigh the costs, the risks, and the trade-offs associated with each. Developed after consultation with more than one hundred leading experts and decision-makers with vast experience and diverse perspectives on U.S.-Soviet relations, the study asked citizens to grapple with these questions: Should the U.S. work toward a future in which it gains the upper hand over the Soviets both militarily and politically? Or should the two countries agree to reduce their nuclear arsenals, but continue to compete in other areas? Or should the U.S. and the Soviets change their adversarial relationship and work together on common problems such as nuclear proliferation or terrorism or environmental concerns? Or, as a fourth alternative, should the U.S. move away from its role as a global superpower, and concentrate its efforts on defending only North America?

Emerging from the research is a rich and detailed picture of what Americans want for the future, what risks and trade-offs are or are not acceptable to them, and what policies they are prepared to support _after_ they have thought seriously about the costs and compromises of each. Thus, the research captures more than just Americans' hopes and dreams -- or even their worst fears -- as important as those may be. It provides an understanding of the kind of future Americans are willing to work for and the long-term policies they will support even when confronted with the risks and costs and compromises that are part of the real world of foreign policy.

The research described in the following pages is the capstone of an ambitious project entitled "The Public, the Soviets, and Nuclear Arms." Its work has included more than 20 workshops with national security experts in the U.S. and overseas, dicussions with community leaders in ten cities across the country, and over forty focus group discussions with typical citizens to develop lines of inquiry, test hypotheses, and pretest the research design.

In January 1988, the project began a second phase of research, in itself an innovation that sought to go beyond the limitations imposed in telephone surveys. The study convened cross sections of the public in five cities across the country for intensive three-hour sessions in which the futures were presented and discussed in detail. The salient features of each future and the costs, risks, and trade-offs associated with it were explained and reiterated through video and print materials prepared specifically for this project, and in small group discussions led by professional moderators. Thus, the views expressed by participants at the end of the evening sessions -- the views described in this report -- represent something considerably more than top-of-the-head responses to this exceedingly complex arena of foreign policy.

Moreover, through a cooperative arrangement with Americans Talk Security (ATS), the project has been able to enrich its own findings by supplementing them with the most comprehensive and timely analyses of public opinion on current U.S.-Soviet relations yet available. ATS, a collaboration of three of the nation's most respected polling organizations (Marttila and Kiley, Market Opinion Research, and the Daniel Yankelovich Group) and the Public Agenda, is monitoring attitudes on U.S.-Soviet relations throughout the 1988 primaries and the general election. The ATS findings provide a context for understanding where Americans want to go in the future and what the basis is for their thinking, a context that is discussed in some detail in Chapter I.

The project has also had the benefit of what constitutes a virtual test market study of Americans' views on the four futures. Running concurrently with the formal research study was "Public Summit '88," a public education effort featuring intensive media discussion of the alternative futures (and the risks and tradeoffs associated with each) in four cities -- Baltimore, Nashville, San Antonio, and Seattle. Each campaign, cosponsored by local television stations and newspapers, culminated in city-wide balloting on the futures with over 76,000 citizens returning ballots. Yielding results generally consistent with the research findings, the Public Summit campaigns were a real-life mirror of the research. Moreover, in a compressed, but true-to-life fashion, Public Summit '88 suggests what might evolve from broad public discussion of the future of U.S.-Soviet relations over a period of years.

Taken together, the findings from the research study and the trends emerging from current polling, both described here, and the real-life debate and balloting in the Public Summit cities give leaders a thought-provoking forecast of the kinds of policies Americans are willing to support now and into the next century.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Highlights from the Research

The research study described in this report asked respondents to think through four alternative futures for U.S.-Soviet relations in the year 2010. Their responses reveal a detailed picture of what Americans want for the future and what steps they are willing to take to get there: Below are some highlights from the study.

> 76% of respondents ranked a future of cooperative problem solving where the two countries would work jointly on problems such as terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and pollution as their first or second choice among the four futures. 83% said that the most convincing argument in favor of this choice was that issues like these are "the real prolems facing us and the Soviets."
>
> 74% ranked a future in which the two countries would cooperate to reduce their nuclear arsenals, but compete in other areas as their first or second choice. Here, the most convincing argument was the danger of the weapons themselves. For example, 75% said we should drastically cut the number of nuclear weapons on both sides so that, if somehow nuclear weapons are ever used, "the whole world won't be destroyed."

39% ranked a future in which the U.S. tries to gain the upper hand over the Soviets as their first or second choice. Here, most respondents were concerned that trying to gain military superiority is "a formula for an endless arms race" (75%), and that this approach would be too expensive because it would mean "enormous defense spending, year after year" (70%).

The choice, however, was not without some appeal. People want the U.S. to be strong militarily as evidenced by the 71% who said the Soviets are "constantly testing us, probing for weakness and they're quick to take advantage whenever they find any."

Only 12% ranked a future in which the U.S. would defend only North America and move away from its position as a global superpower as their first or second choice. In rejecting this future, people were persuaded by arguments that if the U.S. pulls back, "many nations would feel more insecure and would build their own nuclear weapons" (66%) and that "history shows it is U.S. strength that keeps ruthless, aggressive countries from starting trouble around the world" (61%).

> Here again, although respondents rejected this future, at least one aspect of it was enormously popular. 79% agreed that while the U.S. spends billions to defend Japan and Europe, "they are winning the economic competition and taking away American jobs." And 78% want our allies to pay more of the cost of their own defense "even if that means losing our influence over them on economic issues."

Although asked to respond to four specific futures as part of the research design, people were free to pick and choose among the elements of the futures. Thus the study suggests that the public has its own preferred or composite future with the Soviets, one that combines aspects of all four presented in the study. Based on results from this study, and from other opinion research that has been made available to us, we describe the public's preferred future in the interpretive summary that follows.

Interpretive Summary

By the year 2010, Americans want a relationship with the Soviet Union that is strikingly different from the one the two countries have had in the past, a relationship that is less adversarial, more pragmatic, and more businesslike. But whether such a future is really possible depends, for most Americans, on what the Soviets themselves do in the next few years. If the Soviets, under General Secretary Gorbachev, continue to take what most Americans see as positive steps, then such a future could become a reality. If the Soviets go back to their "old ways," then something like the Cold War may resume.

Asked to think seriously about four alternative futures with the Soviets, respondents proved to have a point of view uniquely their own. They chose a future where the two countries would work jointly on common problems based on the self-interest of each. Americans believe that it is possible and sensible, despite basic differences in the two societies, for the U.S. and the Soviets to agree to reduce their nuclear arsenals sharply and jointly confront problems that endanger both countries -- problems such as nuclear proliferation, terrorism, and environmental and health crises like AIDS. Moreover, people believe that the two superpowers could and should, cooperate to "cool down" Third World crises, such as in the Middle East, that might erupt into major conflagrations drawing in both nations. In short, Americans are ready to make a deal with the Soviets for the year 2000 and beyond, _if_ the Soviet prove, in the meantime, that they will keep their part of the bargain.

Moreover, research techniques that probe beneath the surface of people's responses suggest that this willingness to turn the page on the past and begin anew with the Soviets is neither wishful thinking, nor top-of-the-head reaction, nor the afterglow of the 1987 Reagan-Gorbachev summit. Even after being forcefully and systematically confronted with the serious risks and compromises the country might be forced to live with, a large majority of respondents favored exploring a fundmentally different relationship with the Soviets over the next two decades.

The study suggests that people's desire for a different future relationship with the Soviets reflects their own thoughtful reassessment of what the dangers to the U.S. and its people really are in the 1980s and 1990s. These are the major elements of that reassessment:

> Americans no longer see the Soviets as a direct nuclear threat to the U.S., and increasingly, they see the nuclear arms race as both unwinnable and prohibitatively expensive. Therefore, a majority rejects a future in which the U.S. tries to gain the upper hand over the Soviets militarily and politically.

Americans do see serious dangers to this country from instability, violence, and terrorism in the Third World, and they believe the United States must continue to play a role as a world power. Therefore, they wholly reject a future of "isolationist" retrenchment, with the U.S. relinquishing its role as a global superpower and defending only itself and its neighbors in North America.

Americans believe that the Soviets, although not our friends, are rational and hard headed and, if we are careful, that it is possible to develop a working relationship based on the self-interest of both nations. Greatly reducing the number of nuclear arms is clearly seen to be in both countries' self-interest. The arms race is not.

Americans believe that continued hostility and mistrust toward the Soviets is diverting the country's attention from other serious threats to its future -- a lagging economy and loss of competitiveness, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, a restive and hostile Third World and other global problems. Therefore, they want to work toward a future in which the two countries turn their attention to these other problems.

It is essential to emphasize that, despite Americans' desire for a different kind of future with the Soviets, they are not prepared to leap headlong into a new relationship. People are not interested in "instant detente." Instead, they want a cautious, careful, step-by-step approach where Soviet trustworthiness is repeatedly assessed based on accrued experience. People hope that General Secretary Gorbachev is different and that the Soviets are changing, but they are skeptical about Soviet intentions, particularly in the Third World. They believe the Soviets will continue to test, probe, and take advantage of weakness. There is still deep and widespread suspicion of the Soviets, the residue of four decades of cold war.

However, what matters to most Americans is the here and now. A more cooperative future is not, for most Americans, derailed by reminders of past communist aggression or misbehavior or the ideological differences between the two countries. What can derail such a future, however, is what the Soviets do now and in the next few years. Military aggression in the Third World, reneging or cheating on arms agreements, serious new abuses in human rights could lead a large majority of Americans to conclude that a future of cooperation with the Soviets, however desirable it may be, is just not possible. If this happens, Americans stand ready to counter and renew the Cold War. The INF Treaty, the scheduled withdrawal from Afghanistan, glasnost, perestroika are, for the American people, arenas where the Soviets are essentially "on probation." The real future between the two countries depends on whether the Soviets will practice what they are now preaching.

***

CHAPTER I: THE PUBLIC'S STARTING POINT

To set a context for understanding what Americans want U.S.-Soviet relations to be like in the year 2010, we begin by looking at the present. We review findings from two sources that, together, suggest what Americans are thinking in this election year, and how that thinking has changed over the past several years. One source of data is Voter Options on Nuclear Arms which reports on a 1984 survey conducted by the Public Agenda Foundation and the Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University. The survey looked at public attitudes about the Soviets, nuclear arms policies, and related issues.

Our second source is a series of indepth studies of public opinion about foreign policy and national security issues conducted by the Americans Talk Security project (ATS) in late 1987 and 1988. ATS is a joint project of three nationally prominent opinion research organizations: Market Opinion Research, Marttila and Kiley, and The Daniel Yankelovich Group, with qualitative research conducted by Public Agenda. ATS is designed to provide the country's leadership, including the Presidential campaigns of both parties, with unbiased information about the current state of public thinking on U.S.-Soviet relations, the nuclear arms race, and other national security issues.

In the next few pages, we provide a profile of the current state of public opinion, a picture of what we call the public's "starting point." We also use data from Voter Options and Americans Talk Security (ATS) throughout our report to enrich findings and interpretations from our own study.

Over the past few years, Americans have taken a new look at what they see as the nature of the threat posed by the Soviet Union to this nation's security. In the 1984, Public Agenda/Brown Center Voter Options study, a 56% to 36% margin agreed that "the Soviet Union is like Hitler's Germany -- an evil empire trying to take over the world." But three years later, in October, 1987 an ATS study by Marttila and Kiley found that this claim was rejected by a margin of 58% to 38%. In January, 1988, ATS (Market Opinion Research) also found that 61% of Americans feel that relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union are getting better, a sharp increase from the 24% expressing this view just two years before in an October 1986 Gallup study.

Similarly, in 1985, 52% of Americans said that the military threat from the Soviet Union is "constantly growing and presents a real, immediate danger to the United States." But by October, 1987, ATS found the number expressing this view had dropped to 31%.

TABLE 1: CHANGING VIEWS ABOUT THE SOVIETS

	1984-86 Agree %	1987-88 Agree %	Net Change %
The Soviet Union is like Hitler's Germany -- an evil empire trying to rule the world (*Voter Options*, 1984; ATS/M&K, 1987)	56	38	-18
The military threat from the Soviet Union is constantly growing and presents a real, immediate danger to the United States (CBS/NYT, 1985; ATS/M&K, 1987)	52	31	-21
Relations between the United States and the Soviet Union are getting better (Gallup, 1986; ATS/MOR, 1988)	24	61	+37

Americans' views about the nature of the Soviet threat seemed to be shaped by several factors: first, by perceptions about General Secretary Gorbachev; second, an abiding mistrust of Soviet intentions, and third, by a characterization of Soviet intentions as hard-headed and potentially dangerous, but not irrational or maniacal.

Americans hope that Mr. Gorbachev is fundamentally different from his predecessors, but they are not certain. ATS also found that 71% think that Mr. Gorbachev is different from previous Soviet leaders, with 58% saying he "is more interested in peace" than past Soviet leaders. While 20% said that Mr. Gorbachev was "more dangerous" than past Soviet leaders, 35% said that he was "less dangerous." By January, 1988, an ATS survey by Market Opinion Research found that 72% of the public had an overall rating of Mr. Gorbachev that was generally favorable. Finally, 70% agreed that the "Soviets are more serious about arms control and more willing to make compromises in order to achieve it, than they have been in a long time."

TABLE 2: ATTITUDES TOWARDS GORBACHEV

	Agree %	Disagree %
General impressions of Gorbachev are mostly favorable	72	23
Gorbachev is different from previous Soviet leaders	71	24
The Soviets are more serious about arms control, and more willing to make compromises in order to achieve it, than they have been in a long time	70	25

ATS, Marttila and Kiley, October, 1987.

	Agree %	Disagree %
Compared to past Soviet leaders, Mikhail Gorbachev is more interested in peace with the West*	58	3
Compared to past Soviet leaders, Gorbachev is less dangerous**	35	20

ATS, Market Opinion Research, January, 1988.

---

* "Compared to past Soviet leaders, would you say that Mikhail Gorbachev is more or less interested in peace with the West, or about the same?"

**Compared to past Soviet leaders, do you think that Gorbachev is more dangerous, less dangerous, or about the same?"

Balancing the perception that Mr. Gorbachev may be different is a conviction that the Soviets still constitute a significant threat and will take advantage of any perceived weakness. In the 1984 Voter Options study, 65% of those surveyed agreed that "if we are weak, the Soviet Union, at the right moment, will attack us or our allies in Europe and Japan, and in January, 1988, 64% continued to agree with this statement (ATS, Market Opinion Research).

Moreover, people continue to feel that the Soviets are especially dangerous in the Third World. In the 1984 Voter Options report, Americans agreed, by 56% to 38%, that "whenever there is trouble in the world -- in the Middle East, Central America or anywhere else -- chances are the Soviets are behind it." And in October, 1987, ATS found that people still hold this view by a nearly identical margin (58% to 37%).

TABLE 3: ABIDING MISTRUST OF THE SOVIET UNION

	1984 Agree %	1988 Agree %
If we are weak, the Soviet Union, at the right moment, will attack us or our allies in Europe and Japan	65	64*

	1984 Agree %	1987 Agree %
Whenever there is trouble around the world -- in the Middle East, Central America or anywhere else -- the chances are the Soviets are behind it	56	58**

Voter Options, The Public Agenda Foundation and The Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University, 1984.

* ATS, Market Opinion Research, January 1988.
** ATS, Marttila and Kiley, October, 1987.

Thus, what may be crucial to understanding what Americans want for the future is the sharp distinction people draw between the direct Soviet threat and that posed by terrorists or Islamic fundamentalism. Most Americans do not believe that the Soviets are likely to attack the U.S. or its allies directly or impulsively, that a Soviet invasion of Europe is imminent, or that the Soviets will launch a nuclear first strike against the U.S. through a "window of vulnerability."

In the pretest questionnaire administered to respondents for the Public Agenda/Brown Center panels, only 15% said that a nuclear war is most likely to start through a Soviet invasion of Europe or first strike against the U.S. Additionally, 67% agreed that "while the leaders of the Soviet Union may be ruthless, they are not reckless or irrational fanatics." In January, 1988, ATS found that a plurality (49% to 44%) felt that "the Soviets aren't fanatics about spreading communism, they won't take any reckless chances." (These and other data that support this interpretation are discussed at length in the report.)

TABLE 4: THE SOVIET THREAT: CONSTANT, BUT NOT IRRATIONAL

	Agree %	Disagree %
While leaders of the Soviet Union may be ruthless, they are not reckless or irrational fanatics	67	15*
The Soviets aren't fanatics about spreading communism, they won't take any reckless chances (ATS/MOR, January, 1988)	49	44

VIEWS ABOUT HOW A NUCLEAR WAR IS MOST LIKELY TO START

Most Likely Scenario	Agree* %
A war in the Third World (for example, in the Middle East) will escalate and draw in the superpowers	55
Terrorists or a mad man will use a nuclear weapon	21
The Soviets will invade Europe or launch a surprise attack with nuclear weapons against the U.S.	15
A nuclear weapon will be launched by accident	12

* Pretest result.

Finally, ATS found 69% saying that the recent major buildup of military defenses was necessary, with only 27% saying it was unnecessary. Therefore, people's views about the Soviets may also stem from a belief that the U.S. and its allies are militarily stronger and thus more able to deter any aggression.

Overall, a comparison of the Public Agenda/Brown Center 1984 study to current ATS data suggests that Americans' views about the Soviet threat have changed in important respects. The Soviets are seen more positively, and they are not believed to be reckless or likely to attack directly. There are widespread favorable perceptions about Mr. Gorbachev. And, though the Soviets are still seen as a threat in the Third World and likely to "take advantage of weakness," there is a general feeling that relations are improving. In short, the public's thinking about the Soviets and about U.S.-Soviet relations is in the process of a change.

TABLE 5: ATTITUDES TOWARDS RECENT MILITARY BUILD-UP

	Necessary %	Unnecessary %
The federal government has undertaken a major build-up of our military defense during the past several years, was this necessary or unnecessary	69	27

ATS/Marttila and Kiley, Inc., October 1987.

CHAPTER TWO: THE PUBLIC LOOKS AT FOUR FUTURES

The Need for a New Methodology

In the 1984 Voter Options study, the Public Agenda/Brown Center learned that public thinking about U.S.-Soviet relations and the nuclear arms race is characterized by broad areas of consensus and conflict. Areas of consensus were defined to exist when at least 75% of the public agreed with a proposition. Such areas included what an all-out nuclear war would mean, recognition that both the U.S. and the Soviet Union have an overkill capability, and the view that the nuclear arms race is unwinnable. On these questions, neither wording changes, nor context, nor question order had any significant effect on the results. Conflict was defined to exist on questions where public opinion was divided or where results changed with relatively minor changes in wording or context.

Following the 1984 report, the Public Agenda and the Center for Foreign Policy Development focused their attention on exploring these areas of conflict in focus groups with citizens and workshops with community leaders in ten cities around the country. From that work, we found that one distinction was the basis of much of the conflict -- the distinction between what people saw as near-term vs. long-term dangers to the country.

People thought about the nuclear arms issue in a compartmentalized fashion; they favored short-term measures that would lead the country in a direction opposite to where they wanted to go in the long term. To illustrate, many favored a short term build up of military strength and

---

simultaneously worried about the long-term effects of such a build up. And so the primary unanswered question left from 1984 was: How would people resolve the inconsistency? What judgment would people reach about the best course for the country to follow if they took both long and short term considerations into account simultaneously?

While opinion polling using a national probability sample is the most accurate method for measuring public opinion, it reflects people's current thinking. It is best used, therefore, on issues with which people are familiar. But polling on issues that people have not considered tends to lead to volatile and unreliable results; opinions shift, depending on events, new information or arguments. In addition, even the most sophisticated questionnaire can introduce only a limited amount of information about tradeoffs, risks and costs for a given policy. Also, opinion polling gauges the views of the isolated individual: it does not reflect the impact of interactive discussion of the issue with other people.

To enable people to confront the issues of U.S.-Soviet relations and nuclear arms in a serious, thoughtful fashion, we needed a method that would enable them to think about both long-term goals for the nation and the short-term policies necessary to reach those goals. To stimulate people to reach a considered judgment about the best course for the country, we needed to provide the time for them to understand a proposed policy, see its implications, (including its costs and risks), consider the arguments for and against it within a context that compared alternatives, and allow for political dialogue with others. Our tasks then were to prepare a context within which people could consider the questions, and to develop a methodology that would enable us to record and measure their responses. For the context, we constructed four visions of the future: four scenarios about how the world might be in the year 2010. The four futures had to satisfy a number of criteria simultaneously:

1. They had to include a substantial range of realistic alternatives (and, for that reason, exclude utopian options);
2. The alternatives had to be mutually exclusive, or at least not overlap to any great extent;
3. The futures had to involve choices about which direction the country should follow;
4. They had to include the important short-term policy choices;
5. A broad range of experts had to agree about the risks, costs and tradeoffs involved with each future;
6. The choices had to be understandable to the general public;
7. The futures had to be deemed ideologically balanced and fair by experts and outsiders with widely different views.

The futures were developed through a research and development process spanning more than eighteen months. In a key respect, the process was highly unusual and possibly unique. It involved two concurrent streams of research interacting with each other. Policy research, led by the Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown, examined the various ways in which broad alternatives for the future of U.S.-Soviet relations could be conceived and constructed. Opinion research, led by Public Agenda, explored people's initial thoughts and preconceptions, what people "hear" and what they "don't hear," and what arguments strike them as particularly convincing or unconvincing. Mutual feedback between both streams of research were required to craft the kinds of alternative futures required for the overall project.

Once initially conceived, the futures were reviewed for political balance and accuracy by scores of experts from various institutions and with differing political points of view. They were tested for understandability and balance with the public in dozens of focus groups. After months of gestation, review by experts, analysis and research, four alternative visions of U.S.-Soviet relations in the year 2010, were formulated. The futures (described more fully in the following pages and summarized in the Appendix) are fully discussed in a pamphlet entitled Four Futures available from the Center for Foreign Policy Development. The entire research process used in this project will be described in a forthcoming book.

Once the four futures were decided on, a method was needed which would permit people to consider them thoughtfully, and register the results. Participants would need to be given a good deal of information and have enough time to consider arguments, costs, risks and tradeoffs about complex, unfamiliar issues. A research method developed by the Public Agenda for an unrelated project met all requirements. In mid-1987, the Ford Foundation assigned the Public Agenda the task of gauging public reaction to a series of sweeping reforms of the social welfare system. The Public Agenda developed and tested a research method using "citizen review panels". (See The Public's Perspective on Social Welfare Reform, The Public Agenda Foundation, January, 1988.)

On this project, the panel method worked as follows. In January, 1988, we brought together a total of 963 people in five cities (Baltimore, Nashville, San Antonio, Seattle, and Chicago) who represented a broad cross section of the population. Panels were assembled using quotas based on race, sex, education, income and political affiliation. Findings from the panels were validated by comparing results on identical questions from national surveys using probability samples. Those checks demonstrated that the five-city sample closely approximates a national cross-section on the basis of both demographic and attitudinal similarity (Details of the method are described in the Technical Appendix, a companion volume to this report).

In each of the five-city panels, respondents filled out a pretest questionnaire to measure their opinions before the session began. We then showed a film (written and produced by staff at the Public Agenda and the Center) describing the futures. After the film, the group was divided into fifteen-person panels where a professionally trained moderator* led the group through a discussion of each future. In the panels, people were given a list of arguments for and against each future, and advised of a number of practical policies (or policy implications) that would have to be implemented if a future were to become the nation's goal. Finally, they were advised that each future made certain assumptions about the greatest danger facing the U.S. and that these needed to be understood and debated. The moderators emphasized that the project was an exercise in democracy, that they were not advocates of any position, and that people were to consider the alternatives based solely on what they thought would be the best course for the country. At the end of the session, people filled out a second, posttest questionnaire designed to measure the extent to which their views had changed, and had "worked through" their feelings to reach a stable, considered judgment.

* The Human Organization Science Institute at Villanova University was used to recruit and train the moderators who were members of the faculty at Villanova University and St. Joseph's College in Philadelphia.

SUMMARY OF THE FOUR FUTURES

SUMMARY OF THE FOUR FUTURES*

FUTURE ONE: The U.S. Gains The Upper Hand. By 2010, the U.S. will have achieved military and political superiority over the Soviet Union. We will have realized that the Soviets, no matter what they pretend, aim to dominate the world. So we will have developed advanced nuclear and other weapons, probably including a "Star Wars" defense against missiles. And we will be vigorously opposing Marxism in the Third World.

Arguments FOR this future:

- Possible because we are wealthier and have an edge in high technology.
- We are already in a winner-take-all competition and, realistically, this is the only way to keep the Soviets at bay.
- Grenada proves that we can stop communist expansion.
- We have an obligation to oppose Soviet/communist expansion and defend freedom.

Arguments AGAINST this future:

- Too expensive, would mean enormous defense spending, year after year.
- Too dangerous, the Soviets might feel like a cornered rat.
- A formula for an endless arms race.
- Trying to stop communism will lead to more Vietnams.

The BASIC PERSPECTIVE here:

- The greatest danger we face is Soviet aggression.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS for the next few years:

- Build up nuclear and nonnuclear weapons to a level superior to the Soviets.
- Rapidly develop and begin to deploy SDI ("Star Wars").
- Strongly aid freedom fighters combatting communism in the Third World. (Examples: Nicaragua, Africa, Afghanistan, Grenada.)

* For a more detailed statement of the futures, see the project's pamphlet, Four Futures available from the Center for Foreign Policy Development.

FUTURE TWO: Eliminate the Nuclear Threat; Compete Otherwise. By 2010, we and the Soviets will have taken far-reaching steps to make sure that a global holocaust is impossible. Nearly all nuclear weapons will be scrapped, with strict safeguards against Soviet cheating. And the two sides will have taken steps to prevent any crisis (for instance, in the Middle East) from escalating into a global war. But despite the agreement on nuclear arms, both sides continue to compete for world influence, and both seek to gain supporters in the Third World.

Arguments FOR this future:

- If nuclear weapons are ever used, at least the world won't be destroyed.
- The Soviets now allow on-site inspection and so we'll know if they cheat.
- Local conflicts that escalate are how a nuclear war could start.
- We'll be able to strongly oppose communist expansion with less risk.

Arguments AGAINST this future:

- The fear of nuclear weapons has kept the peace since World War II.
- It's not realistic to think we can compete with the Soviets in the Third World while cooperating with them on nuclear arms.
- The Soviets will cheat on arms control treaties.
- The Soviets will have more nonnuclear or conventional forces (tanks and soldiers).

The BASIC PERSPECTIVE here:

- The greatest danger we face is global nuclear war.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS for the next few years:

- Negotiate drastic cuts in nuclear weapons, working in stages toward removing them almost entirely. Agreements must include strict verification.
- Negotiate agreements to prevent escalation of regional crises into global war.
- Support anti-communist freedom fighters in the Third World ONLY when there is no risk of a crisis with the Soviets. (Examples: Afghanistan, Grenada.)

FUTURE THREE: Cooperative Problem Solving. By 2010, the U.S. and the Soviet Union will have changed their whole relationship, much as the U.S. and China did in the 1970s. The two sides are now cooperating on problems that face them both, such as terrorism, the spread of nuclear weapons, and dangers to the environment. The two sides have built up trust, which allows them to work now on the tougher problem of nuclear weapons. Building up trust has not been done on U.S. terms; both sides have made compromises.

Arguments FOR this future:

- The spread of nuclear weapons, pollution and AIDS are the real problems facing us and the Soviets.
- Improving trust is the only way to end the arms race.
- They seem willing to go down this path.
- Unless we change the relationship, even the most comprehensive arms agreements won't make us safe.

Arguments AGAINST this future:

- Would require sharing high technology and giving up our main edge.
- The Soviets will pretend to cooperate, then turn on us.
- Would mean ending the fight against communist expansion and accepting a dictatorship as our partner.
- Would mean sharing or not building SDI, and never gaining clear military superiority.

The BASIC PERSPECTIVE here:

- The greatest danger we face is the hostility between the two sides.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS for the next few years:

- Begin working with the Soviets on common problems: AIDS, terrorism, the spread of nuclear weapons, pollution and other environmental dangers.
- As greater trust is built up, use that trust to attack the tougher problem of nuclear weapons.
- Treat communist Third World nations pragmatically, not ideologically. (Example, open trade with Cuba.)

FUTURE FOUR: Defend Only North America. By 2010, we will have recognized that the main challenge we face in not the Soviets but problems here at home. We will have phased out our alliances in Europe and Asia, and brought home our troops. Now the U.S. maintains a strong defense of North America, probably including a ("Star Wars") defense against missiles. Otherwise we are concentrating on our own affairs. What the Soviets do or don't do is not a major concern.

Arguments FOR this future:

- Our allies are capable of defending themselves.
- We spend billions to defend Japan and Europe while they are winning the economic competition and taking away American jobs.
- We can't afford to defend so many nations.
- Being the "world's policeman" increases the chances of nuclear war.

Arguments AGAINST this future:

- Our allies may make concessions to the Soviets and leave us alone in a world filled with enemies.
- Other nations will feel the need to build their own nuclear weapons.
- We have a moral obligation to defend freedom around the world.

The BASIC PERSPECTIVE here:

- The greatest danger we face is being involved in other people's affairs all around the world.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS for the next few years:

- Tell the West Europeans, Japanese and other allies that we will phase out alliances on a set schedule.
- Begin to bring our troops home from abroad. All of them will be home in, say, ten years.
- Rapidly develop and begin to deploy SDI ("Star Wars") if it proves effective.

Overall Reaction to the Four Futures

People's posttest (considered) responses show they want a future relationship with the Soviet Union that is fundamentally different from the one we have today. Asked to rank the futures in order of preference, 46% chose the future in which the U.S. and the Soviets have a cooperative relationship and work together to solve common problems (Future Three) as their first choice, and 30% named it second. In sum, 76% said this was either their first or second choice. In addition to rank-ordering the futures, we asked people to rate each future in terms of overall favorability, and 70% said they "strongly" or "somewhat" favored this future, and 21% were opposed.

The future in which the U.S. and the Soviets have eliminated the risk of nuclear annihilation while continuing to compete in the Third World (Future Two) was the second most popular alternative, with 28% naming it as their first choice, and 46% naming it second. In total, 74% said this future was their first or second preference. In terms of overall favorability, 55% said they strongly or somewhat favored this future, with 34% opposed.

TABLE 6: POSTTEST RANKING OF THE FUTURES

Futures Three and Two were the most popular, and Future Four was rejected.

	Posttest Rank Order		
Future	First Choice	Second Choice	First or Second Choice
	%	%	%
FUTURE ONE: The U.S. Gains the Upper Hand	24	15	39
FUTURE TWO: Eliminate the Nuclear Threat; Otherwise Compete	28	46	74
FUTURE THREE: Cooperative Problem Solving	46	30	76
FUTURE FOUR: Defend Only North America	4	8	12

Most people did not favor the idea of trying to gain military superiority over the Soviets. The U.S. gaining the upper hand militarily and politically over the Soviet Union (Future One) was the first choice of 24%, and the second choice of 15%. That is, 39% said this future was either their first or second choice. However, as we shall discuss later, certain elements of this future had broad appeal. Asked to rate this approach in terms of overall favorability, 49% said they either strongly or somewhat favored the U.S. gaining the upper hand, and 41% were opposed.

The public almost totally rejected the idea that the U.S. should withdraw its military forces from around the globe and defend only the continent of North America. Future Four was the first choice of only 4%, and another 8% named is as their second preference. When asked about this approach by itself, 29% favored it and 65% were opposed. However, as we shall discuss, certain elements of this approach also struck a responsive chord among large number of people. (See Tables 6 and 7.)

TABLE 7: SUMMARY: VIEWS ABOUT THE FOUR FUTURES

Future	Total in Favor	Total Opposed
	%	%
Future One	49	41
Future Two	55	34
Future Three	70	21
Future Four	29	65

Future	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Strongly Oppose	Somewhat Oppose
	%	%	%	%
Future One	26	23	17	24
Future Two	21	34	21	13
Future Three	39	31	13	8
Future Four	14	15	23	42

Perhaps as important as reactions to the futures themselves is the fact that elements or aspects of each future were rated favorably. That is, people found arguments or policies related to all four futures to be appealing, even though they may have been uncomfortable with other aspects. These results suggest that people's preference for one or another of the futures as a whole is only part of the story. What may be even more analytically significant is how people rated the elements and arguments separately.

In the next sections, we detail reactions to the four futures, explaining what people did and did not like about each one, including which arguments they found convincing. Then we combine the arguments and policies that people favored about each future into what might be considered a hypothetical fifth alternative -- in effect, what appears to be the public's preferred future. It is this preferred future that may provide clues about what a new, broadly-based national security policy consensus in the United States would look like.

***

FUTURE THREE: COOPERATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

The Most Popular Future: Cooperative Problem Solving

In the world of Future Three, the superpowers' relationship has changed from one of fierce hostility and competition to a businesslike, working relationship addressing common problems such as the spread of nuclear weapons, terrorism, nuclear power plant safety, space exploration and environmental protection. This future was presented and discussed, not as "the outbreak of peace," but as a pragmatic approach toward dealing with urgent problems confronting both countries that would be easier to solve if the superpowers worked together. That is, common self-interest, not the desire for friendship, was the underlying rationale for this future. Concrete policy options and trade-offs, including costs and risks, were systematically presented with this and each of the other futures.

TABLE 8: REACTION TO FUTURE THREE: COOPERATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

FUTURE THREE: Cooperative Problem Solving. Make agreements with the Soviets on problems facing both nations, such as threats to the environment and the spread of nuclear weapons around the world.

PRO: These problems are a danger to both nations, and this course is the best way to win trust.
CON: The Soviets will use this opportunity to take advantage of us.

Views About Future Three		Total %	
Strongly Favor		39	
	Total in Favor		> 70
Somewhat Favor		31	
Somewhat Oppose		13	
	Total Opposed		> 21
Strongly Oppose		8	
Not Sure		9	

Cooperative Problem Solving was the most popular future. In the posttest, 70% favored this approach. As noted earlier, when asked to rank the futures, 76% selected it as their first or second choice. The pragmatic appeal of this approach is underscored by the fact that, by and large, people liked it regardless of their political party or ideological orientation. Among Republicans, for example, 66% favored this approach (compared to 74% among Democrats and 74% among Independents); and 71% of Republicans gave this future a rank of first or second (compared to 79% among Democrats and 85% among Independents). Among conservatives, 70% ranked it first or second (compared to 82% among liberals and 76% among moderates); and 65% of conservatives favored it compared to 80% among liberals and 71% among moderates.

TABLE 9: REACTION TO FUTURE THREE: COOPERATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

(Key demographics)

FUTURE THREE: Cooperative Problem-Solving. Make agreements with the Soviets on problems facing both nations, such as threats to the environment and the spread of nuclear weapons around the world.

PRO: These problems are a danger to both nations, and this course is the best way to win trust.
CON: The Soviets will use this opportunity to take advantage of us.

Views About Future Three	Favor	Oppose	Not Sure	Rank Order First or Second
	%	%	%	%
Total	70	21	9	76
Democrats	74	17	10	79
Republicans	66	28	6	71
Independents	74	19	7	85
Liberals	80	13	7	82
Moderates	71	19	10	76
Conservatives	65	30	6	70

What People Like About This Approach

1. We and the Soviets face common problems: People felt that the most convincing argument for trying to forge a working relationship with the Soviets by the year 2010 is that superpower mistrust and hostility keeps both countries from focusing their attention on urgent problems that represent even greater long-term threats to both. That is, each side's preoccupation with the other keeps both superpowers from turning their attention to issues threatening both of them. At a consensus level of 83%, people agreed that a convincing argument for this option is that issues such as "the spread of nuclear weapons, pollution and AIDS are the real problems facing us and the Soviets." (See Table 10.)

A man from Baltimore expressed this sentiment with these words: "Twenty years from now," he said, "who's going to care about nuclear weapons when you got millions of people in the graveyard with AIDS." A Chicago area man said, "Not long ago, terrorists [in the Middle East] seized their people [Soviet diplomats/advisors] too. The threat from Moslem radicals will push the two sides together." Another person from Chicago offered a similar thought. "I think the big threat is coming from radicals and from the others [in the Middle East]," he said. "If they get their hands on nuclear weapons, look out." And a woman from San Antonio offered what she saw as another area of mutual interest. "They have problems with nuclear

TABLE 10: REACTIONS TO THE ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST FUTURE THREE

Pro Arguments:	A Convincing Argument	Not Convincing
	%	%
The spread of nuclear weapons, pollution and AIDS are the real problems facing us and the Soviets	83	14
Unless we change our relationship, even the most comprehensive arms agreement won't make us safe	73	18
A basic change in the US-Soviet relationship that improves trust is the only way we'll be able to end the arms race	73	20
The Soviets seem willing to go down this path	40	38
Con Arguments:		
The Future would require us sharing our high technology and giving up our main edge	43	48
The Soviets will trick us, pretend to cooperate, then turn on us as they've done in the past	42	39
This Future would mean sharing or not building SDI, and giving up the idea of gaining military superiority	42	45
This Future would mean giving up the fight against communist expansion around the world and accepting a ruthless dictatorship as an equal partner	26	59

power," she said. "They had that big trouble [at Chernobyl] and we had Three Mile Island. There [improving nuclear power plant safety] is something we could work on together."

2. The relationship is more important than the weapons: Two additional arguments for this future were found to be persuasive by large majorities, and both arguments relate to the arms race. As many as 73% agreed that "unless we change our relationship, even the most comprehensive arms agreement won't make us safe." The same number also said that "a basic change in the U.S.-Soviet relationship that improves trust is the *only* way we'll be able to end the arms race." In effect, people believe that it is the tension between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, rather than the weapons, that determines how much danger we face. To the public, the relationship between the U.S. and the Soviet Union is the key. The arms race, nuclear weapons, and the status of any arms control agreements, while important, are all considered to be on by-products of the relationship and, by themselves, much less important than the level of tensions. (See Table 10)

A woman from Nashville expressed this sentiment when she said, "You've got to have a good relationship *before* you can really do anything [such

---

as sharply reducing both sides' nuclear arsenals]." A Nashville man echoed this thought. "The first thing you've got to do is try to understand the other side a little better, and vice versa, before you try to do anything else [such as drastic nuclear arms reductions]." A Chicago-area man said, "I think you've really got to start building trust in areas that aren't so sensitive as nuclear weapons. I'm not sure how much can be achieved by 2010; we have to work slowly. But [U.S.-Soviet relations] could be much better [in a generation]."

The public's view in this respect is quite different from much expert opinion. For example, many experts (including the Scowcroft Commission) argue that the best way to reduce the danger of nuclear annihilation is to develop and maintain a stable nuclear deterrent. In another area, some experts, including former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, have long argued that the risks of failure at a superpower summit are so great that summit meetings should be arranged only when two leaders can ratify what has already been agreed upon in negotiations.

The public's views stand in sharp contrast to this kind of expert thinking. To the public, tension is the problem. And reducing tensions is felt to be a more effective way to reduce the danger of conflict (and of nuclear annihilation) than what is seen as a mechanistic or mechanical approach such as developing a particular missile system or negotiating a particular arms control treaty. Comments from the discussions (and from focus group interviews in preparation for the panels) suggest that the public is usually happy to see a summit meeting, regardless of whether an agreement is reached. A summit where the U.S. President and the Soviet leader meet and talk cordially is, to the public, important in and of itself because it is a tangible indication of a normalized relationship in which superpower tensions (and thus the chances of U.S.-Soviet conflict) have been reduced or are at least under control. Therefore, the idea of regular or even annual summits (which experts might consider to be a waste of time or, worse, even dangerous) would be popular since the public feels that dialogue between leaders is, in and of itself, a useful way to reduce tensions and thus lessen the risk of conflict.

3. Some willingness to give up SDI: With each future, people were given a number of policy options. Asked about policies that would move the country toward Future Three, a majority said they would give up (or share) SDI in order to build a more cooperative working relationship with the Soviets. As many as 59% said they would accept this trade-off, a result suggesting that support for developing a working partnership on common problems is both deep and widely held. On the other hand, as we shall discuss later, a majority would not give up SDI to get an agreement on deep cuts in nuclear weapons. Therefore, we believe that the public's views about SDI are quite complex, and we interpret this result as indicative of the public's willingness to pay a high price for changing the U.S.-Soviet relationship, rather than as a definitive reading of their willingness to trade off SDI.

A related policy question drew virtual majority support; 50% said they would favor the U.S. and the Soviet Union working together on an ambitious space project such as a manned mission to the planet Mars, even if that meant sharing our high technology. "When I think of things the Russians could give us [if the two countries had a cooperative relationship], I think they could help us with our space program," a woman from Seattle said. "Ever since Challenger, we've had a lot of trouble [with the space program], and they [the Soviets] seem to be ahead of us in space." However, 43% opposed this policy, suggesting, as mentioned and discussed further below, rather widespread reluctance to share such technology. (See Table 11.)

TABLE 11: VIEWS ABOUT POLICIES RELATED TO FUTURE THREE

	Posttest Total				
Statement	Strg Favor	Smwt Favor	Smwt Oppse	Strg Oppse	NS
	%	%	%	%	%
We should work with the Soviets to solve problems facing both countries, even if the only way to gain their trust is by sharing or not building SDI or Star Wars	28	31	19	17	6
Total in Favor/Opposed	59		36		
We and the Soviets should work together on a joint manned mission to the planet Mars even if that means sharing our high technology	21	29	21	22	7
Total in Favor/Opposed	50		43		
We should recognize Cuba and establish trade relations even if that means strengthening and legitimizing a communist government in this hemisphere	10	26	22	32	10
Total in Favor/Opposed	36		54		

The Public's Reservations About this Approach:

1. Will the Soviets only pretend to cooperate? As with each of the futures, respondents were systematically informed that developing a relationship of cooperative problem solving involved certain tradeoffs, risks and counter-arguments. One argument against this future was convincing only to a minority. When people were told that this future "would mean giving up the fight against communist expansion and accepting a ruthless dictatorship as an equal partner." only 26% said that this was a convincing argument. However, a large minority (42%) expressed concern about whether the Soviets were truly interested in working together, saying that a convincing argument against this approach was that the Soviets will only "pretend to cooperate, then turn on us." In principle, this future was acceptable to a large majority; but many question whether Soviet behavior will make this option feasible. (See Table 10.)

2. Should we share our high technology? People expressed reservations about sharing U.S. high technology. In order to build trust and forge a working partnership, people were told, the U.S. and the Soviets would have to share expertise in areas where each had an advantage. One such trade-off, it was explained, involved the U.S. sharing its high technology. People were divided about whether sharing high technology "and giving up our main edge" was a convincing argument against this approach, with 43% saying it was and 48% said it wasn't. (See Table 10.)

In the discussions, many people expressed deep reservations about this step. A Nashville man said, "They [the Soviets] will take [our high technology] home with them, and then they'll be better off than we are." A woman from that city said, "They may steal [our high technology], but it won't be the first time we've been stolen blind." A man from Chicago said, "Their economy is in such disarray that they want to get technology from us and the only way to do that is to be friendly." But others felt that taking this step was an acceptable risk as long as it was not done recklessly. "Let's do it [share high technology] gradually," a man from San Antonio said. "Let's start with things like medical [technology] and the environment [that do not have national security implications]."

---

3. What are Soviet intentions in the Third World? The greatest reservation people have about a future of cooperative problem solving center around questions about Soviet intentions in the Third World. In the 1984 Public Agenda/Brown Center *Voter Options* study, people said, by a margin of 56% to 38%, that "whenever there is trouble around the world -- in the Middle East, Central America or anywhere else -- chances are the Soviets are behind it." In the October, 1987, ATS/Marttila and Kiley study, 58% agreed with this view. In the panels, majorities said that in the foreseeable future, it was at least fairly likely that the Soviets would increase their support of terrorist groups and countries (69%) or attack another country in the way they invaded Afghanistan (66%). Also, 55% said that it was at least fairly likely that Marxism/communism would spread to more and more countries, and 53% agreed that no matter what they say, the Soviets will never stop trying to reach the goal of a communist world. (See Table 12.)

TABLE 12: PERCEIVED DANGERS PRESENTED BY THE SOVIET UNION

Agree with Statement	Total
	%
The Soviets are constantly testing us, probing for weakness, and they're quick to take advantage whenever they find any	68*
It is (very or fairly) likely that the Soviet Union will increase their support of countries like Libya and of terrorist groups in the Mideast	69
It is (very or fairly) likely that the Soviet Union will attack other nations in the way they invaded Afghanistan	66
Whenever there's trouble in the world -- in the Middle East, Central America, or anywhere else -- the chances are the Soviets are behind it	58**
It is (very or fairly) likely that Marxism/communism will spread to more and more countries around the globe	55
No matter what they say, the Soviets really want every country in the world to be communist and they will never stop trying to reach that goal	53
The Soviets have so many problems of their own and they don't really pose much of a threat to the U.S.	17

* Pretest result.
** ATS/Marttila and Kiley, Inc., October, 1987.

In Summary: Proceed with Caution

People were asked to consider each future in terms of what to do over the next twenty years. Hardly anyone felt that the U.S. should (or could) develop a full working relationship on common problems in the short term. To the contrary, people made it clear in the discussions that they thought such a move would be risky or even reckless. People said the U.S. should take steps in this direction, but that these steps should be gradual, taken one-at-a-time, and that we should carefully assess what the Soviets do in response. Exceptionally large numbers were "not sure" if the Soviets want to work with us on common problems (27%), or "ready to do business with us just like the Chinese did in the 1970s," (46%).* The comments of a San Antonio woman reflected many people's sentiments. "We shouldn't do this overnight," she said. "Don't go jumping off the end. Build trust gradually. Slowly, very slowly. But we won't know if this [approach] works until we try it." (See Table 13.)

---

* On a few items, unusually large numbers said they were "not sure," and all of those items involved the intentions of the Soviet leadership. A "not sure" percentage of 46% is extraordinary.

TABLE 13: WIDESPREAD UNCERTAINTY ABOUT SOVIET INTENTIONS

Statement	Pretest Not Sure
	%
The new Soviet leaders are ready to "do business" with us just like the Chinese were in the 1970's	46
The Soviets will cheat on any nuclear arms agreement they sign	36
When all is said and done, someday the US will have to fight the Soviet Union to stop communism	33
The Soviets truly want to work with us to solve common problems, such as threats to the environment and the spread of nuclear weapons to more countries around the world	27

While people were hopeful that a working relationship can be forged, most were only cautiously optimistic. A Seattle man said, "Everything seems to be going very smoothly between us and Russia now, but Gorbachev may not be secure in his decisions, he might change his mind. Or what happens if he's overthrown? We'd be back where we started." And a man from Chicago said, "With Gorbachev, they are opening up, giving their people more freedom. I do think we can do this [establish a working relationship on common problems] with watchfulness. We have to be watchful."

FUTURE TWO: ELIMINATE THE NUCLEAR THREAT, COMPETE OTHERWISE

Future Two: Eliminate the Nuclear Threat; Otherwise Compete

The second most popular future presented a world that is very different from the one envisioned in Future Three. In Future Two, the superpowers are not cooperating on a broad range of common problems. Rather, they have recognized that they have one overriding mutual interest and can cooperate in only one area of extraordinary importance -- eliminating the threat of mutual annihilation. In this future, the two sides realize that they have irreconcilable philosophical differences, and so continue to compete and vie for influence in the world. Nevertheless, each has also come to see that its adversary sincerely wants to eliminate the threat of nuclear war, and so both sides have agreed to reduce drastically their nuclear arsenals and negotiate agreements to make sure that regional conflicts do not escalate into all-out war.

As noted, Future Two was the second most popular future of those surveyed, with 28% naming it as their first choice, and 46% saying it was their second preference. In total, 74% said that this future was their first or second choice. When asked about this future by itself, not compared to the others, 55% either strongly or somewhat favored trying to eliminate the nuclear threat while otherwise competing with the Soviets. (See Table 6.)

TABLE 14: REACTION TO FUTURE TWO: ELIMINATE THE NUCLEAR THREAT; COMPETE OTHERWISE

FUTURE TWO: Eliminate the Nuclear Threat; Compete Otherwise. Reach agreements with the Soviets to end the arms race and prevent local conflicts, such as those in the Middle East, from posing a nuclear threat; at the same time, fight communist expansion in the Third World.

PRO: The way things are going now, it's only a matter of time before there is a nuclear war.

CON: The Soviets can't be trusted to keep such agreements.

Views About Future Two		Total	%
Strongly Favor	Total in Favor	21	>55
Somewhat Favor		34	
Somewhat Oppose	Total Opposed	21	>34
Strongly Oppose		13	
Not Sure		11	

This future combined three main ideas: drastic reductions in nuclear arsenals; agreements with the Soviets to make sure that regional conflicts do not escalate into all-out war; but continued competition and clear rivalry for influence in the Third World. Below, we discuss reactions to each component.

What the Public Liked About This Approach

1. If the unthinkable were to happen: Future Two features reductions in the superpowers' nuclear arsenals that are drastic enough to eliminate the threat of destroying civilization in a holocaust. This idea is popular indeed. In January, 1988, ATS found that 81% approved of the START proposal in which "the U.S. and the Soviet Union are talking about cutting their long range nuclear forces in half." The reason for this sentiment and a powerful argument in favor of Future Two involves the sheer size of the two sides' nuclear arsenals and the likely effect of a nuclear war. In the 1984 *Voter Options* report, 90% agreed that "we and the Soviets now have enough nuclear weapons to blow each other up several times over." A woman from Seattle expressed this same thought. "We both have the ability to blow each other up, what -- six hundred times?" she said. "What do we need all those weapons *for*? Why do we need so many?." A man from Baltimore added, "These things [nuclear weapons] are lying around like hand grenades." (See Table 17.)

TABLE 15: REACTIONS TO THE ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST FUTURE TWO

Pro Arguments:	A Convincing Argument	Not Convincing
	%	%
We and the Soviets should reach agreements to prevent local conflicts, such as in the Middle East, from escalating because they are the major way that a nuclear war might start	75	17
We should drastically cut the number of nuclear weapons on both sides so that, if somehow they are ever used, the whole world won't be destroyed	75	23
Under their new leader, the Soviets will allow on-site inspection and so we'll know if they cheat	47	41
Eliminating the nuclear threat will enable us to oppose communist expansion in the Third World with less risk	42	42
Con Arguments:		
This future would leave the Soviets with a large advantage in nonnuclear (conventional) forces such as tanks and soldiers	53	33
The Soviets can't be trusted and will cheat on arms control treaties	47	37
It's just not realistic to think that we can compete with the Soviets in the Third World while at the same time, cooperate with them to eliminate the risk of nuclear war	38	45
We should not reach agreements to end the arms race because nuclear weapons have kept the peace since World War II	31	57

In this vein, 75% said that a convincing argument for this future is that "we should drastically cut the number of nuclear weapons on both sides so that, if somehow they are ever used, the whole world won't be destroyed." A woman from Nashville said, "The way things are now, everything is in jeopardy. Every person on earth, maybe every living thing on earth could be killed in a nuclear war. We will destroy the planet if we keep going the way we have been." A man from Seattle said, "It's like we have a dam, but we can't keep piling stuff up behind the dam, because if the dam breaks, then it will mean the end of everything." (See Table 15.)

---

2. A Third World conflict is the most likely way that a nuclear war will start: A second reason for the popularity of Future Two stems from people's beliefs about how a nuclear war is most likely to start. People were given four scenarios about how a nuclear war might begin, and asked which one they thought was most likely. The scenarios were: a Soviet attack in Europe or elsewhere during a time of tension; the escalation of a regional conflict that drags in the superpowers; the use of a nuclear weapon by a terrorist or madman; and the accidental launch of a nuclear weapon, perhaps by a computer. A majority (52%) said that the most likely scenario was that a regional conflict would escalate and drag in the superpowers. A man from Baltimore spoke for many when he said, "The problem in the Middle East is that you've got more than the Russians and the United States involved. It's the third guy who pulls you into a confrontation. That's the most dangerous thing." (See Table 17.)

Consistent with their belief about how a nuclear war is most likely to start is the fact that, at a consensus-level, people endorsed the idea of negotiating with the Soviets to make sure that regional conflicts do not escalate; 75% said that a convincing argument for eliminating the nuclear threat (Future Two) is that "We and the Soviets should reach agreements to prevent local conflicts, such as in the Middle East, from escalating because they are the major way that a nuclear war might start." Additionally, 70% said they would favor reaching such an agreement "even if that means doing things that our allies such as Israel oppose." (See Table 15 and 16.)

TABLE 16: VIEWS ABOUT POLICIES RELATED TO FUTURE TWO

	Posttest Total				
Statement	Strg Favor	Smwt Favor	Smwt Oppse	Strg Oppse	NS
	%	%	%	%	%
We should reach an agreement with the Soviets to cut both sides' nuclear arsenals drastically, even if that means increasing our nonnuclear, conventional military strength (army, navy, etc.) so that it matches theirs	37	37	12	8	6
Total in Favor/Opposed	74		20		
We should negotiate agreements with the Soviets to prevent regional crises from escalating into global war even if that means doing things that our allies such as Israel oppose	28	42	13	7	11
Total in Favor/Opposed	70		20		
We should reach an agreement with the Soviets to cut both sides' nuclear arsenals drastically, even if that means leaving them with the largest army in the world	17	30	19	28	6
Total in Favor/Opposed	47		47		

---

3. The Soviets are not seen as a direct, nuclear threat: People do have concerns about Soviet intentions in the Third World. But a consensus-level, 82%, agreed that "though they may never be our friends, the Soviets want to reduce the danger of nuclear war just as much as we do." That is, most people think that the Soviet Union does not pose a direct, nuclear threat to the U.S. Asked how a nuclear war is most likely to start, only 15% named a Soviet invasion of Europe or a surprise attack against the U.S. as the most likely scenario. A woman from Nashville said, "If there were a nuclear war, then America would be destroyed, but so would the whole world. And I think that point is realized by the Soviets." (See Tables 17 and 18.)

This result is a far cry from the views that shaped U.S. policy during the Cold War years when our greatest threat was felt to be a direct confrontation against the Soviets with Europe as the battleground. Today, most people do not think the Soviets are likely to attack the U.S. or its allies suddenly or impulsively. In fact, only 22% said the Soviets would have attacked the U.S. with atomic weapons in the 1950s if the Soviets had invented the A-bomb and had an atomic monopoly from the end of World War II until about 1955 as the U.S. did. (See Table 19.)

TABLE 17: VIEWS ABOUT HOW A NUCLEAR WAR IS MOST LIKELY TO START

The Most Likely Scenario Is:	Agree*
	%
A war in the Third World (for example, in the Middle East) will escalate and draw in the superpowers	52
Terrorists or a mad man will use a nuclear weapon	21
The Soviets will invade Europe or launch a surprise attack with nuclear weapons against the U.S.	15
A nuclear weapon will be launched by accident	12

* Pretest result.

VIEWS ABOUT START TALKS

Statement	ATS/MOR Jan 88		
	Approve	Disapprove	Not Sure
	%	%	%
The U.S. and the Soviet Union are talking about cutting their long range nuclear forces in half. Do you approve or disapprove?	81	12	7

The January, 1988 survey conducted by Market Opinion Research for ATS, showed that Americans believe the leaders of the Soviet Union are not reckless; in the panels, 67% agreed that while they may be ruthless, the leaders of the Soviet Union are not "irrational fanatics." In this regard, the public considers the Soviet leadership to be very different from Iranian or Moslem radicals. Even some who spoke with concern about the downing of Korean Airlines Flight #007 suggested that other factors besides fanaticism were involved. A San Antonio man said, "With the airliner [Flight #007], I would say that was caused by a lack of communications and the lack of [effective Soviet] technology. They didn't realize [#007 was a commercial aircraft], they just assumed [it was a spy plane]. I don't think they meant [to shoot down a plane filled with civilians]." Another man offered this view. "They're chess players," he said. "Chess is their national game. They're cautious and deliberate, they think carefully about every move. But they're not about to tip over the board." (See Table 18.)

TABLE 18: PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE NUCLEAR THREAT POSED BY THE SOVIET UNION

Agree with statement	Total
	%
Though they may never be our friends, the Soviets want to reduce the danger of nuclear war just as much as we do	82
While the leaders of the Soviet Union may be ruthless, they are not reckless or irrational fanatics	67*
It is (very or fairly) likely that sooner or later, the Soviets will launch an all out, surprise attack with nuclear weapons on the U.S.	20
The most likely way that a nuclear war will start is due to a Soviet invasion of Europe or a nuclear surprise attack against the U.S.	15*

---

* Pretest result.

Together, these results suggest that people see the Soviets as a dangerous adversary -- but as a long-term, nonnuclear threat to the U.S. and its allies, not as a fanatical or a direct, nuclear threat. As noted, people think it is far more likely that the Soviets will cause trouble in the Third World by supporting terrorism and communist insurgencies. A San Antonio woman said, "The Russians don't want a nuclear war that would destroy our land -- but they probably do want our land. They may want to take over our corn fields and factories, but they don't want to make them radioactive or blow them up." A man from Nashville expressed a similar sentiment. "I'm not worried about [nuclear war with] the Soviet Union because they don't want to destroy the world, they want to dominate it."

TABLE 19: VIEWS ABOUT WHAT THE SOVIETS WOULD HAVE DONE HAD THEY INVENTED THE A-BOMB

Q. "Imagine that history were changed and the Soviet Union, not the United States, invented the atomic bomb. Imagine that the Soviet Union used A-bombs on Japan to end World War II, and that they were the only country in the world with atomic (or nuclear) weapons from about 1945 until about 1955. If history were different, which of these do you think would have happened?"

	Pretest Agree %
A. Sometime between 1945 and 1955, the Soviets would have attacked the U.S. with atomic bombs, thereby defeating their strongest enemy	22
B. The Soviets would have tried to intimidate the U.S. by threatening to use atomic bombs, but they would never have actually exploded any; their goal is to take over the U.S., not blow it up	50
C. The Soviets would have used atomic weapons only to defend themselves and their allies	15
Not Sure	13

---

4. Do nuclear weapons keep the peace? The Market Opinion Research study from January 1988 shows the public rejecting the argument that we should not drastically cutback on nuclear weapons because nuclear weapons have kept the peace since the end of World War II. In that study, only 27% said that the elimination of all nuclear weapons would make war with the Soviet Union more likely. A nearly equal number (22%) said this would make war less likely, and 47% said it wouldn't make a difference. (See Table 20.)

Reactions in the panels were consistent with that finding. While 31% agreed that we should not end the arms race because nuclear weapons have kept the peace, 57% found that this was a convincing argument against future two. "I disagree completely [with the idea that nuclear weapons have kept the peace]," said a woman from Seattle. "What about Vietnam? Was Vietnam peace? Do you call that peace?" (See Table 15.)

TABLE 20: VIEWS ABOUT WHETHER NUCLEAR WEAPONS PREVENT WAR

Q. Some people "point out that the United States and the Soviet Union do not dare start a war with each other because each side would be destroyed by the other side's nuclear weapons. If they eliminated all their nuclear weapons, they would be more likely to go to war. What is your opinion -- do you think eliminating all nuclear weapons would make war between the United States and the Soviet Union more likely, less likely, or wouldn't make a difference?"

	ATS/MOR Jan, 1988
	%
More likely	27
Wouldn't make a difference	47
Less likely	22
Don't know/refused	4

---

5. Direct linkage: Only a minority (36%) said that the U.S. should "refuse to work with the Soviets until they show greater respect for human rights, even if that means not signing any arms control agreements." As many as 58% rejected the idea of directly linking human rights to arms control. "If [a proposed arms reduction agreement] is a good deal for us," a Nashville man said, "we should judge it on its own merits and sign. If it's not a good deal, don't sign." However, this man also went on to suggest that fundamental progress in terms of U.S.-Soviet relations would be made only when Soviet behavior moderated in a number of areas including human rights, a withdrawal from Afghanistan, and reduced support for communist insurgencies around the world. Importantly, this response is consistent with the view (described in the discussion on Cooperative Problem Solving, Future Three) that the relationship is more important than the weapons; and Soviet actions do more to shape people's views about the state of U.S.-Soviet relations than any other factor.

The Public's Reservations About this Approach:

1. Can the Soviets be trusted? Given that this future entails a significant reduction in weapons, the theme of whether we can trust the Soviets to abide by nuclear arms reduction agreements ran through the

TABLE 21: VIEWS ABOUT WHETHER THE SOVIETS CAN BE TRUSTED

Q. "Do you think the Soviet Union can or cannot be trusted to keep it part of the agreement in this [the INF] treaty?"

	ATS/MOR Jan, 1988 %	LA Times Nov, 1985 %
Can Be Trusted	43	24
Cannot Be Trusted	48	66
Don't Know/Refused	10	10

Q. "[INF] is a good way to find out if the Soviets can be trusted before we agree to more arms reductions."

	ATS/MOR Jan, 1988 %
Agree	86
Disagree	12

Q. "Some people say that if Gorbachev succeeds in implementing his policies, he will produce significant changed in the Soviet Union. I'm going to mention some of those possible changes; for each one, please tell me whether you feel it is very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely that this change will result from Gorbachev's leadership?

-- The Soviet Union will become more committed to reducing nuclear arms and willing to make reasonable concessions in order to achieve this goal."

	ATS/M&K Oct, 1987 %
Very Likely	16
Somewhat Likely	48
Somewhat Unlikely	19
Very Unlikely	13
Not Sure	4

principal reservations people voiced about the idea of eliminating the nuclear risk (Future Two). An ATS study (Market Opinion Research, January 1988) found that people doubted whether the Soviets could be trusted to keep their part of an arms control bargain, with only 43% saying the Soviets "can be trusted to keep its part of an agreement in the [INF] treaty," and 48% saying they cannot be. In the panels, people agreed by a margin of 47% to 37% that a convincing argument against this future was that "the Soviets can't be trusted and will cheat on arms control treaties." A man from Nashville said, "The Russians are going to cheat, we know that ahead of time." A woman from San Antonio said, "I think their ethic is, 'The end justifies the means.' They will lie and deceive just to get what they want. A lot of people want peace so badly that they'll believe them." (See Tables 15 and 21.)

In October, 1987, ATS/Marttila and Kiley also found uncertainty about Soviet trustworthiness. While a majority (64%) said it was likely that, in the future, the Soviets will become more committed to reducing nuclear arms and willing to make reasonable concessions to achieve this goal in the future, only 16% said this was "very likely." A Seattle man said, "I want to believe [that the Soviets won't cheat]. But I question whether they will cheat or not." (See Table 21.)

TABLE 22: VIEWS ABOUT THE INF TREATY

Views About the INF Treaty	ATS/MOR Jan, 1988 %	ATS/M&K Oct, 1987 %
Approve	79	72
Disapprove	17	20

Q. Does this treaty make the world more or less safe?

	ATS/MOR Jan 1988 %
More Safe	40
Doesn't Make Much Difference	52
Less Safe	6

Q. "How likely is it that the U.S. will sign an arms control agreement that will leave us in a weak or inferior position?"

	Posttest %
Very Likely	9
Fairly Likely	20
Not That Likely	65
Not Sure	7

Q. "Should we reach a 50% nuclear reduction agreement as soon as possible or delay until we know the Soviets adhere to [INF]?"

	ATS/MOR Jan 1988 %
Delay Agreement	66
Reach Agreement	30

At the same time, people have little immediate concern that the U.S. will sign an arms reduction agreement that will "leave us in a weak or inferior position." Only 29% say this was even fairly likely. In January, 1988, Market Opinion Research/ATS found that 79% either strongly or somewhat approve of the recently negotiated INF agreement. And in that survey, 66% suggested that INF was a good way to test Soviet sincerity, by agreeing that the U.S. should delay signing a START agreement "until we know if the Soviet Union lives up to" the INF accord. In sum, the results suggest that people are hopeful about the recently negotiated INF agreement, and willing to use it to test Soviet trustworthiness. People are wary but hopeful about drastic nuclear arms reductions in the future. While there is a national consensus to move in this direction, there is also widespread ambivalence about whether the Soviets can be trusted to abide by future agreements that sharply cut the size of the two superpowers' nuclear arsenals. (See Table 22.)

2. Nuclear arms reductions would leave a conventional imbalance: A second reservation people had about eliminating the nuclear threat was that drastic nuclear arms reductions would leave a conventional imbalance. Given people's views about the threat of Soviet expansionism, this approach would, to some, only "make the world safe for the Red

TABLE 23: VIEWS ABOUT THE CONVENTIONAL WEAPON IMBALANCE

Which of these three policies on conventional forces do you favor before another arms reduction?

	ATS/MOR Jan, 1988
	%
Soviet Reductions Needed	43
NATO Increases Needed	27
Go Ahead Without Either	22

VIEWS ABOUT THE ARMS RACE

Agree With Statement	Total
	%
If we had a bigger nuclear arsenal than the Soviets, they would keep building until they caught up	83*
It is (very or fairly) likely that we will neglect problems here in the U.S. by spending so much on what seems like a never-ending arms race	72

* Pretest result.

Army." Large numbers expressed a related concern. For example, 53% said that a convincing argument against Future Two was that "this future would leave the Soviets with a large advantage in nonnuclear or conventional forces such as tanks and soldiers." In January, 1988, ATS/Market Opinion Research found similar public disquiet about a conventional imbalance in a world with many fewer nuclear warheads. (See Table 15 and 23.)

In effect, people's responses suggest that they think that a conventional imbalance in a world with fewer nuclear weapons would leave the U.S. in a dangerous and unstable situation. A man from Nashville used the following analogy. "You've got to have equal power. It's like kids in school. The big kids are going to pick on the little kids. But when the little kids grow up [and get as strong as the bigger kids], there's no more trouble."

How does the public want to resolve this imbalance? In the panels, 74% said they would favor drastic nuclear arms reductions even if that meant increasing our conventional strength. In January, 1988, ATS found that the public's clear preference was for Soviet conventional force reductions rather than a buildup of U.S. or Western strength. But the more important point is that the public believes the imbalance should be redressed one way or the other for at least two reasons: first, they believe that the imbalance is militarily dangerous, especially given their concerns about Soviet intentions in the Third World; and second,

---

many see this as a good litmus-test issue of Soviet intentions. "This is a way to find out just how sincere they are," a Seattle area woman said. "If they want us to cut back [on nuclear weapons], they have to show us ahead of time that they won't take advantage [with their superior conventional forces]."

3. Cooperating and competing simultaneously: People expressed uncertainty about the central premise of this approach: whether the two sides can drastically cut their nuclear arsenals and simultaneously compete for influence around the world. While experts may feel that such a strategy is realistic, a sizable minority (38%) said a convincing argument against this approach is that "it's just not realistic to think that we can compete with the Soviets in the Third World while, at the same time, cooperate with them to eliminate the risk of nuclear war." And 17% were not sure. A man from Chicago put it this way: "How can you say that in one area, we're going to be hostile and in another area we're going to negotiate?" A Baltimore woman said, "It's not logical to think that we can agree on arms and be fighting all around the world. It's just not logical." These results (and comments in the earlier focus group discussions) suggest that a "mixed" strategy in which the superpowers agree to limit their competition to certain areas is confusing to many Americans and may be, in fact, one source of public discontent with the status quo. (See Table 15.)

In Summary: Muted Enthusiasm

People favor trying to eliminate the risk of a global holocaust, and a large majority feels that the Soviets are as interested as we are. Yet there is much uncertainty about Soviet cheating and whether the Soviets will abide by the agreements they sign. People do not believe nuclear weapons have kept the peace, but they are concerned about a conventional imbalance that might result from drastic nuclear arms reductions.

But it is not mainly their concern about either Soviet cheating or a conventional imbalance that mutes people's enthusiasm for this approach; rather, the main factor limiting support involves what this future would not do. It would not fundamentally alter the U.S.-Soviet relationship. It would not have the U.S. and the Soviet Union working together to solve common problems. Instead, this future envisions that the superpowers would continue to be adversaries and aggressively compete for influence around the globe. A woman from Chicago said, "Even if we did get rid of nuclear weapons, we would still have the ability to make them. And if we're still competing [with the Soviets], then you're always going to have the threat of [one country building new nuclear weapons and therefore the threat of] a nuclear war." This future envisions a world in which the superpowers have agreed to carefully manage the competition.

But the public's goal is to end the competition altogether, not manage it more safely. People are not interested in controlling the arms race or, as we shall see, even in trying to win it. Rather, they want the arms race to end but only alongside basic, fundamental change.

FUTURE ONE: THE U.S. GAINS THE UPPER HAND

In the world of Future One, the U.S. has gained clear military and political superiority over the Soviet Union; the U.S. has vigorously protected countries from Soviet or communist aggression, and has applied economic and political pressure against the Soviets and their allies. This future was people's third choice; 24% ranked it as their first preference and 15% named it second, giving it a combined first and second ranking of 39%. However, while this overall approach was not broadly supported, certain elements appealed to many respondents. Asked to rate this approach without comparison to the others, 49% said they strongly or somewhat favored it. Below, we discuss people's reservations about this future, then those aspects they found attractive. (See Tables 6 and 24.)

The Public's Reservations About this Approach:

1. A never-ending arms race: An important reason why gaining the upper hand (Future One) was unpopular involved the prospect of a never-ending arms race. A large majority (75%) felt that a convincing argument against this approach was that "trying to gain military superiority is a formula for an endless arms race." A Baltimore area woman said, "This [Future One] won't work. We build one [missile], they build one. We build two, they build three. It's a constant race to see how much we're going to build." A man from Baltimore said that even if the U.S. did gain the upper hand, the Soviets would simply work until they achieved parity. "We

TABLE 24: REACTION TO FUTURE ONE: THE U.S. GAINS THE UPPER HAND

FUTURE ONE: The U.S. Gains the Upper Hand. Regain clear superiority over the Soviets in military matters and world affairs.

PRO: History proves that strength is the only thing the Russians respect.

CON: Risky: will make the Soviets feel as if they're backed into a corner.

Views About Future One		Total	
		%	
Strongly Favor	Total in Favor	26	> 49
Somewhat Favor		23	
Somewhat Oppose	Total Opposed	17	> 41
Strongly Oppose		24	
Not Sure		10	

had the upper hand on them way back [in the 1950s]," he said. "And they caught up with us. If we get [an upper hand] again, they're going to catch up again." In fact, 83% agreed with the statement that if the U.S. did have a bigger nuclear arsenal than the Soviets, "they would keep building until they caught up." (See Tables 23 and 25.)

2. The expense of trying to gain the upper hand: A second powerful reason for the lack of support involved cost. As many as 70% said that a convincing argument against this approach was that it would be too expensive "because it would mean enormous defense spending, year after year." A man from Nashville linked the costs of the arms race to technological advances. "Every time our technology advances," he said, "it opens new doors and [building new weapons] gets more expensive." A man from Seattle said, "There's one argument [in favor of this future] that if we keep building up nuclear arms, we can run [the Soviets] into the ground financially. But we'll run ourselves down too." A woman from Baltimore said, "Maybe the Soviets are willing to negotiate [arms reductions] now because they can't afford to run their economy and pay for their military at the same time. Well, guess what -- we can't afford it either! We're almost in as bad shape as they are." Indeed, there was widespread sentiment that U.S. domestic needs suffer because so much money is spent on defense. And large numbers were fearful that this pattern would continue. As many as 74% said that in the foreseeable

TABLE 25: REACTIONS TO THE ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST FUTURE ONE

Pro Arguments:	A Convincing Argument	Not Convincing
	%	%
The U.S. has an obligation to oppose Soviet and communist expansion and defend freedom around the world	55	33
The success of the Grenada invasion proves that we can and should try to stop communist expansion	40	46
We can gain the upper hand because we are wealthier than the Soviets and we have the edge in high technology	43	50
We are already in a winner-take-all competition with the Soviets and, realistically speaking, this is the only way to keep them at bay	30	55
Con Arguments:		
Trying to gain military superiority is a formula for an endless arms race	75	19
This future would be too expensive because it would mean enormous defense spending, year after year	70	21
Trying to stop communist expansion around the world will only lead to more Vietnams	49	38
This future would be too dangerous because the Soviets might feel like a cornered rat	48	37

future, it was either very or fairly likely that we will "neglect problems in the U.S. by spending so much on what seems like a never-ending arms race." (See Table 23.)

3. A dangerous approach: Near majorities also agreed with two other arguments against this approach: that trying to gain the upper hand "would only lead to more Vietnams" (49%) or "be too dangerous because the Soviets might feel like a cornered rat" (48%). A man from Seattle said, "This [approach] is frightening. We don't want to make them feel cornered. Anyone is dangerous when you put their back against the wall. But I'm especially worried about the 'Old Guard,' the ones who have been there for years, working for world domination. They'd really dangerous [if they were backed into a corner.]" A man from Baltimore added, "I don't like [this future]. I think there'd be a lot less tension if there was more parity in the nuclear arms race." (See Table 25.)

TABLE 26: VIEWS ABOUT POLICIES RELATED TO FUTURE ONE

	Posttest Total				
Statement	Strg Favor	Smwt Favor	Smwt Oppse	Strg Oppse	NS
	%	%	%	%	%
We should build SDI even if that means giving up the chance to negotiate deep cuts in nuclear arms	26	30	20	19	6
Total in Favor/Opposed	56		39		
We should provide increased military aid to Third World countries to help them fight communism even if that means increasing the chance that U.S. troops will get involved in local fighting	13	31	30	21	6
Total in Favor/Opposed	44		51		
We should aid anti-communist groups and governments even if that means sometimes supporting dictators and others who do not believe in democracy	10	29	28	25	8
Total in Favor/Opposed	39		53*		
We should refuse to work with the Soviets until they show greater respect for human rights even if that means not signing any arms control agreement	12	24	35	23	5
Total in Favor/Opposed	36		58		

---

* Pretest result was 64% in favor, 31% opposed.

What the Public Liked About This Approach

1. Peace through strength: While the idea of gaining the upper hand was generally rejected, people deeply believe that the U.S. should be strong militarily and capable of resisting aggression. As noted earlier, in October, 1987, ATS/Marttila and Kiley found that 69% agreed that the recent Reagan Administration military buildup was necessary, and only 27% said it was unnecessary. In the panels, 71% agreed that "the Soviets are constantly testing us, probing for weakness, and they're quick to take advantage whenever they find any." A man from Seattle said, "I don't want our country to be weak. I want us to always be able to defend ourselves." A Seattle woman said, "I don't think we should try to be stronger than them. But we're in danger of losing [things that are vital to our national interest] if we're weaker than they are." (See Table 5.)

2. An obligation to defend freedom: A popular argument in favor of this future, endorsed by 54%, was that the U.S. has an obligation to oppose Soviet or communist expansion and defend freedom around the world. "And we're not just doing that [defending other countries] because we're nice guys," a man from San Antonio said. "We're doing it to protect ourselves, because it's in our interests." An impressively high 61% also agreed that it is U.S. strength that "keeps ruthless, aggressive countries from starting trouble around the world." A woman from Chicago said, "We

---

have to support these [developing] countries because if we don't, the communists will just take over. Castro is trying to take over all the Latin American countries and if we don't help, then what's going to happen?" (See Table 26.)

3. Qualified support for anti-communist groups and governments: Asked in the pretest whether the U.S. should help anti-communist groups and governments, 64% said, yes, that the U.S. should provide such assistance. However, when a particular trade-off was added to the question, support plummeted; only 39% said we should aid anti-communists even if that means sometimes supporting dictators and others who do not believe in democracy -- a 25 percentage point drop. A Baltimore man suggested the reason for the sharp decline in people's support. "We've become so anti-communist that we've developed a sort of weird mentality," he said. "We end up supporting anything because it's anti-communist. If Charlie Manson was anti-communist and lived in one of those [Third World] countries, we'd probably support him." (See Table 26.)

The two results, taken together, suggest that while most Americans want the U.S. to help governments and groups who are opposing Marxist or communist expansion, they do not feel that our support should be offered to every country or group, unconditionally. Rather, people want the U.S.

---

to be selective in deciding whom to help and to take a long-term view that weighs pragmatic factors such as the likelihood of success against other considerations including whether such support is in the country's long-term interests and whether it is consistent with U.S. ideals.

Finally, there remains widespread concern about the U.S. getting "dragged into" foreign conflicts. A sizable minority (44%) said the U.S. should provide increased military aid to help Third World countries fight communism, even if that means increasing the chances that U.S. troops will get involved in local fighting. But 51% said they were opposed to this step. (See Table 29.)

4. Building SDI: Reactions to the policies related to this future suggest that the public's views about SDI are complex. In their October, 1987 survey for ATS, Marttila and Kiley found that 54% approved of the continued development of SDI or Star Wars. In the panels, 56%, said that the U.S. should build SDI even if that means giving up the chance to negotiate deep cuts in nuclear weapons. However, in response to another question, a comparable majority (59%) said they would give up SDI in order to forge a working partnership with the Soviets on common problems. The results suggest that improving the relationship is considered more important than a mere reduction in the numbers of nuclear

weapons. And taking all these results together suggests that the country might arrive at a consensus about continuing the SDI program, in some limited form -- at least until there is fundamental change in the overall U.S.-Soviet relationship. But a decision to shelve SDI completely has the potential to divide or even polarize the public. (See Tables 11 and 26.)

In Summary: Less than Total Rejection

Only a minority wants the U.S. to embark on a path to gain a military and political upper hand over the Soviet Union. This approach is considered to be too expensive, too dangerous and not feasible. But rejection of this approach as a whole should not be misinterpreted as rejection of all of its parts. To the contrary, majorities want the U.S. to be strong militarily, to defend freedom around the globe, to aid anti-communist groups and governments (at least when they share our basic values), and to go ahead with at least some version of the SDI program.

What the public largely rejects is clear: the cost of trying to gain the upper hand, which most also believe is ultimately futile. "Can we get the upper hand?" a man from Nashville asked. "We blow them up 10 times, they blow us up 20 times. This [Future One] to me is just impossible." But this approach is also rejected because of concern about defense spending, especially in view of perceptions about the depth of the domestic problems in the U.S. The depth of public concern about the relationship between defense spending and domestic problems will become even more apparent when we examine reactions to the fourth alternative, a future in which the U.S. pulls back from its global commitments and defends only the continent of North America (Future Four).

FUTURE FOUR: DEFEND ONLY NORTH AMERICA

Future Four presents a world in which, by the year 2010, the U.S. has gradually ended its alliances, withdrawn from its global commitments, redefined it security interests, and is actively defending only the continent of North America. This vision of the future was, in effect, totally rejected by people in the panels. Only 4% named this future as their first choice, and only 8% said it was their second choice -- a combined first or second preference of only 12%. However, these figures, by themselves, may be misleading since there were elements or aspects of this approach that large majorities support with enthusiasm. (See Table 6.)

The Public's Reservations About this Approach:

1. The U.S. cannot withdraw from the world: Reactions to this approach as a whole were both negative and strong. "This [future] is ridiculous," a Nashville woman said. "We're not a self-sufficient nation. There's no way we could ever pull this off." A Chicago area woman said, "We're too dependent on other people [and countries] and they're too dependent on us. Now, with [advances in] new technology, the world is getting smaller and smaller." A woman from Seattle said, "We're just so interwoven in every country economically and politically that we almost have to be there."

TABLE 27: REACTION TO FUTURE FOUR: DEFEND ONLY NORTH AMERICA

FUTURE FOUR: Defend Only North America. Bring our troops home, gradually ending our treaty commitments and letting our allies take care of themselves.

PRO: We will be able to concentrate on our own problems here in the U.S.

CON: If we pull back, we will have to stand alone in a hostile world.

Views About Future Four		Total	
		%	
Strongly Favor	Total in Favor	14	> 29
Somewhat Favor		15	
Somewhat Oppose	Total Opposed	23	> 65
Strongly Oppose		42	
Not Sure		7	

People also believe that the United States has an important role to play as a world power. In part, this sentiment stems from the fact that people have a broad view of the country's self-interest. For example, 66% felt that a convincing argument against this future was that "if we pull back, many nations would feel more insecure and would build their own nuclear weapons." A man from Seattle said, "If we pull back, [countries such as Japan and South Korea] will build up their troops and forces, and probably have more radical people [in charge of the government]." A man from Baltimore said, "[South] Korea depends on us to protect them. If we pull out, the first thing they'll do is go out shopping [around the world for a country that will sell them] their own nuclear weapons." (See Table 28.)

Also convincing were two other arguments related to this country's role in the world. A large majority (61%) felt that a convincing argument against this approach involves the lessons of history, that "history shows that it is U.S. strength that keeps ruthless countries from starting trouble around the world." A Nashville area man said that U.S. troops stationed in other countries "is what keeps the balance. Even though we may be acting like the world's policeman," he said, "we're trying to keep a balance in the arms race and all over the world." A man

TABLE 28: REACTIONS TO THE ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST FUTURE FOUR

Pro Arguments:	A Convincing Argument	Not Convincing
	%	%
While we spend billions to defend Japan and Europe, they are winning the economic competition and taking away American jobs	79	16
Being the "world's policeman" increases our chances of getting dragged into a nuclear war	58	34
Especially in view of our problems here in the US, we can't afford to defend so many nations	55	38
Our allies are perfectly capable of defending themselves and they can afford it	33	59
Con Arguments:		
If we pull back, many nations would feel more insecure and would build their own nuclear weapons	66	22
History shows that it is U.S. strength that keeps ruthless aggressive countries from starting trouble around the world	61	28
Our allies may make concessions to the Soviets and eventually leave us alone in a world filled with enemies	55	34
We have a moral obligation to defend freedom around the world	54	36

from Seattle said, "I don't think we can pull back like that, we have to maintain a presence. If we're not there, then other countries will move in." And a woman from Chicago said, "After World War I, we proved that we can't go back to an isolationist view."

Finally, 55% said that another convincing argument against Future Four was that "our allies may make concessions to the Soviets and eventually leave us alone in a world filled with enemies." A man from Chicago said, "No other country has the power to protect these countries like the U.S. does. [So if we pull out], they're going to end up making alliances with the Soviets." A Nashville man said, "I don't think we should pull our troops back because, if we did, [the Soviets] would run over everybody to get whatever they need. Like in Vietnam -- we pulled out and [the communists] were right there." A woman from Nashville said, "We'd be giving the Soviet Union the whole rest of the world." (See Table 28.)

What the Public Liked About This Approach

1. The costs of defending so many countries: While people rejected the idea that by 2010, the U.S. should be defending only North America, large majorities agreed with certain arguments that accompanied this option. Although they rejected the conclusion, many felt that at least some of the underlying rationale made considerable sense. As many as 79% said

TABLE 29: VIEWS ABOUT POLICIES RELATED TO FUTURE FOUR

Statement	Posttest Total				
	Strg Favor	Smwt Favor	Smwt Oppse	Strg Oppse	NS
	%	%	%	%	%
We should make our allies (like Japan and Germany) pay more of the cost of their defense even if that means losing our influence over them on economic issues	37	41	11	4	7
Total in Favor/Opposed	78		15		
We should bring our troops home from overseas and gradually end our treaty commitments even if that means our allies might make concessions to the Soviets	7	13	28	49	4
Total in Favor/Opposed	20		77		
We should stop defending countries around the world and defend only North America, even if that means we might eventually be surrounded by enemies	4	8	21	64	3
Total in Favor/Opposed	12		85		
We should aid anti-communist groups and governments in the Third World even if that means sometimes supporting dictators and others who do not believe in democracy	10	29	28	25	8
Total in Favor/Opposed	39		53		
We should provide increased military aid to Third World countries to help them fight communism, even if that means increasing the chance that U.S. troops will get involved in local fighting.	13	31	30	21	6
Total in Favor/Opposed	44		51		

that a convincing argument for this future is that "while we spend billions to defend Japan and Europe, they are winning the economic competition and taking away American jobs." A man from Chicago said, "While we're on the front lines [in Korea] getting shot at, they're selling us cars and taking away our jobs. Why can't they defend their own country? Why do we have to do it?" (See Tables 28 and 29.)

A smaller number, though still a majority (55%), also found convincing the argument that in view of domestic problems, the U.S. "can't afford to defend so many nations." A man from Baltimore added, "We're bankrupting ourselves [by defending so many countries around the world]. They [our allies] can afford to defend themselves, sure they can. Right now, they're getting a free trip." A woman from San Antonio said, "If we don't take care of things here [in the U.S.], we'll just destroy ourselves while we worry about the Soviet Union." (See Table 28.)

2. The feeling that our allies should carry more of the burden: Consistent with the result cited above was the very strong support people gave to one of the policy particulars related to Future Four. As many as 78% favored making our allies pay more of the cost of their own defense, even if that means losing influence over them on economic issues. A man from Nashville said, "I do think that other countries like Japan and

Germany need to be more responsible for themselves [and their own defense]. As long as we play the policeman's role, they'll let us because it doesn't cost them anything and they'll get all the profits." A Baltimore man was even more passionate. "We're going down the same path that the Roman Empire went down," he said. "We're playing 'Big Brother' all over the world but we're 'Big Brothering' ourselves right down the drain. I'm talking about the Japanese owning new York City. I talking about Germany who puts up absolutely nothing for its own defense." (See Table 29.)

In Summary: "Burden-Sharing" but not Isolationism

The idea that the U.S. should redefine its commitments and withdraw to defend only the continent of North America was totally rejected. People feel that the U.S. must remain a global power for several reasons: first, they think that the country has an obligation or moral responsibility to defend freedom and help countries defend themselves against aggression; second, people believe that U.S. strength has kept the peace and they worry about the effects of withdrawal; and third and most important, people feel that it is in this country's national interests to have strong alliances both for reasons of national security and because of America's economic interdependence with other nations.

However, large numbers of people did support particular aspects or elements related to this approach. There was broad support for making U.S. allies pay more of the cost of their own defense, with 79% saying that we spend billions to defend countries who are winning the economic competition and taking away American jobs. Also, a majority expressed the view that the costs of current U.S. commitments are more than the country can bear, given current domestic needs. And so the intensity of the sentiments underlying this view should not be underestimated just because the future itself was soundly rejected.

CHAPTER THREE: THE PUBLIC'S JUDGMENT

Changes from the Pre- to the Posttest

In our earlier research, including the 1984 Voter Options study, the Public Agenda and the Center for Foreign Policy Development had learned that Americans' thinking about many aspects of the U.S.-Soviet relations/nuclear arms issue was marked by inconsistency and conflict. We had also learned that a principal source of that inconsistency involved what people said they wanted in the short- and long-term.

A fundamental goal of this project was to encourage people to keep both short- and long- term considerations in mind as they weighed what they wanted the country to do over the next twenty years. So we designed and presented the four futures in a way that would minimize the tendency of people to engage in wishful thinking. Research featuring a "fantasyland" vision, bearing no resemblance to what experts and policy makers see as the realistic options, would be virtually worthless to those who are seriously concerned about American public opinion. For that reason, none of the futures presented a utopian vision; none discussed, for example, world government or the arrival of a western-style, two-party democracy inside the Soviet Union. To the contrary, each future was presented along with realistic estimates of its costs and risks as determined by some of the country's most distinguished foreign policy experts.

In view of our research design, it was not surprising that people's initial reactions to the futures were much more positive than their considered judgments. Predictably, before they had time to consider the pro and con arguments and to think about the relationship of short-term steps to long-term goals, people tended to want almost all of the futures, in spite of the deep incompatibilities among them. When asked to rate the futures separately in the pretest, upwards of 70% favored three of them. At this stage of the process, people had not begun to differentiate; their first (and understandable) reaction was to favor alternatives that, however attractive, were in fact logically incompatible.

The change between between the pretest and the posttest was dramatic. People's assessment became much more selective, and their support for all the futures decreased from the pre- to the posttest; in three cases, the decrease was striking.

As we have noted, Future Three remained people's first choice; but it was even more popular at first hearing. In the pretest, a whopping 93% said they favored developing a relationship where the superpowers would cooperate to solve common problems. However, after considering the arguments for and against this future (including the costs and risks),

TABLE 30: COMPARISON OF PRE- AND POSTTEST VIEWS ABOUT THE FUTURES

	Pretest %	Posttest %	Net %
Future One: The U.S. Gains the Upper Hand			
Strongly Favor	32	26	
Total in Favor	>71	>49	-22
Somewhat Favor	39	23	
Somewhat Oppose	11	17	
Total Opposed	>20	>41	+21
Strongly Oppose	9	24	
Not Sure	9	10	
Future Two: Eliminate the Nuclear Threat; Compete Otherwise			
Strongly Favor	64	21	
Total in Favor	>89	>55	-34
Somewhat Favor	25	34	
Somewhat Oppose	6	21	
Total Opposed	> 9	>34	+23
Strongly Oppose	3	13	
Not Sure	3	11	
Future Three: Cooperative Problem-Solving			
Strongly Favor	77	39	
Total in Favor	>93	>70	-23
Somewhat Favor	16	31	
Somewhat Oppose	3	13	
Total Opposed	> 6	>21	+15
Strongly Oppose	3	8	
Not Sure	2	9	
Future Four: Defend Only North America			
Strongly Favor	13	14	
Total in Favor	>33	>29	-4
Somewhat Favor	20	15	
Somewhat Oppose	25	23	
Total Opposed	>61	>65	+4
Strongly Oppose	36	42	
Not Sure	6	7	

---

and after weighing the the policies required to implement it, the number who favored Future Three dropped by 23 percentage points, from 93% to 70%. This result suggests that wishful thinking was kept to a minimum, and that the posttest preference reflects people's considered judgments about which course the U.S. should follow. Even with this decrease, Future Three was people's preferred option, with 70% in favor and only 21% opposed. (See Table 30.)

Support for eliminating the nuclear threat while otherwise competing (Future Two) also dropped sharply from the pre- to the posttest. Whereas 89% favored this option initially, 55% favored this approach after weighing the tradeoffs and considering the risks and costs, a decrease of 34 percentage points. But in spite of these reductions posttest favorability was still comparatively high, with supporters outnumbering opponents by 55% to 34%.

Support for gaining the upper hand (Future One) also decreased sharply, from 70% in favor in the pretest to 49% in the posttest, a drop of 21 percentage points. In the posttest, people were split about the wisdom of this approach, with nearly as many against (41%) as for (49%).

Only with defending only North America (Future Four) was there little change in people's thinking. The numbers in favor in the pretest were nearly identical to the posttest totals. In the pretest, this option was opposed by 61% to 33%, and in the posttest by 65% to 29% -- a drop of only four percentage points. These results suggest that people's initial views about this option were very close to their considered judgment; that is, people had already "worked though" their feelings about the wisdom of having the U.S. redefine its commitments and pull back to a defense of only the North American continent; people had rejected this option in advance. (See Table 30.)

The Public's Composite Future

The four futures were important for two reasons: first, we wanted to get people's reactions to each future as it was presented. But our second goal was to use the futures as a framework from which to draw conclusions about how people felt about elements from all the futures. We wanted to see how people put the policies and arguments together themselves. In short, one of the things we hoped to discover was what the public's "composite" future would be if people took into consideration realistic tradeoffs, risks and costs.

By looking at the broadly supported elements related to each future and reactions to the arguments for and against each one, we can surmise what the public composite future includes. First and most important, people want to change the nature of the U.S.-Soviet relationship; they want to end the Cold War and have the superpowers work together to address common problems. People see such a change, not as a utopian wish, but as a pragmatic response to a world in which the greatest danger we face is no longer direct Soviet aggression but an array of problems that threaten the Soviet Union as well as the U.S. (such as the spread of nuclear weapons, terrorism, disease, pollution and the management of nuclear power). And, people feel, it is superpower hostility that keeps us (and the Soviets) from turning our attention to these problems. However, people have concerns about Soviet intentions and whether the Soviets would agree to such a course. And they worry about sharing high

---

technology, giving up SDI and, in general, moving too quickly (or naively) in this direction.

Second, people want to eliminate the risk of nuclear annihilation by drastically cutting back the size of the superpower arsenals and negotiating agreements to make sure that the superpowers do not get dragged into regional conflicts, thereby setting off a global war. But while people feel that the Soviets are truly interested in such steps, they are also concerned about possible Soviet cheating and about agreements that result in a conventional force imbalance. There is also widespread public concern about possible Soviet aggression and/or support for communist insurgencies in the Third World; and people doubt that the superpowers can compartmentalize their differences by, for example, agreeing to drastic nuclear arms reductions while simultaneously engaging in armed competition in the Third World.

Third, the public believes that the U.S. should be strong militarily. People believe that U.S. weakness will invite aggression and that U.S. strength has kept the peace. People also want the SDI program to go forward in some fashion -- at least unless there is a fundamental change in the overall U.S.-Soviet relationship. However, they believe that the arms race is unwinnable, and that trying to gain "the upper hand" over the Soviets would be too expensive and ultimately futile.

Fourth, the public rejects the idea that the U.S. should withdraw from commitments, but a large majority would like the allies to pay more of the cost of their own defense. People are concerned about the effect of defense spending on U.S. domestic needs and worry about the country's ability to compete in the international economy.

Finally and perhaps most important, all the results taken together suggest that though Americans want a fundamental change in U.S.-Soviet relations that effectively ends the Cold War, they do not want to pursue such a course quickly or recklessly. Rather, people want to work for change gradually, a step at a time, and have the U.S. constantly assess and reassess Soviet intentions and behavior.

SUMMARY

The Reagan-Gorbachev summits have ushered in a new era of public thinking about nuclear arms and the Soviet Union. Americans feel that the arms race is not winnable and they would like to see it end; in the future, people would like to see a fundamental change in relations with the Soviets that would include drastic nuclear arms reductions and the formation of a working partnership on common problems such as the spread of nuclear weapons, terrorism, and nuclear power plant safety.

However, the public is not ready to declare peace. Many people feel that the U.S. was deceived during detente and that the recent military build up was necessary. And now, while most Americans are hopeful about the new Soviet leadership, they remain wary about the Soviets and their motives. The public is taking a wait-and-see attitude and is willing to support the U.S. taking small steps to test Soviet intentions. But the outcome may depend on what the Soviets do. In effect, the Soviets are on probation or on trial in terms of U.S. public opinion.

The current mood is different from anything we've seen. It is unlike the 1950s and 1960s when the Soviets were seen as threatening nuclear war. It is also unlike the 1970s and the early 1980s when the public's thinking swung from one extreme to another. Today, while the Soviets are mistrusted and still regarded as a dangerous adversary, they are also believed to be rational and predictable -- and thus no more interested in

---

nuclear war than we are. In fact, more than 80% believe the Soviets genuinely want to reduce the size of nuclear arsenals, and a large majority feels that the Soviets are potential partners on a range of common problems. Below, we summarize what has and has not changed in terms of public opinion.

What has changed:

1. The Soviets are no longer seen as a nuclear threat;
2. The public feels that the arms race cannot be won and they would, in the future, like to see it end because:
   - The arms race is felt to be too expensive;
   - The Soviets are felt to be truly interested in sharply cutting both sides' nuclear arsenals;
   - The argument that arsenals should not be reduced because nuclear weapons have kept the peace since World War II is rejected;
   - They oppose directly linking human rights with arms control agreements;
   - And they feel that there is little danger in signing an arms agreement in the short term;
3. In the future, people would like to radically change our relationship with the Soviets so that the countries work together on a range of common problems.

What has not changed:

1. The Soviets are not trusted; many assume they will cheat on any arms agreements -- however most do not believe that this, by itself, is reason not to sign;
2. The Soviets are seen as intent on expanding communism in the Third World and ready to take advantage of any weakness;
3. The U.S. must be strong and continue to be a world power, in large part because people say that U.S. strength has kept the peace:
    - But people feel that the U.S. spends too much to defend other countries and that our allies should do more;
    - And they are concerned about the U.S. being the "world's policeman."

In sum, a new set of questions are on the public's mind, questions that involve Soviet intentions toward their neighbors, in the Third World and about arms control agreements. More than anything, how Americans answer these questions will depend on Soviet actions and people's perceptions of Soviet intentions.

APPENDIX I

A Comparative Analysis of the Futures

The first three categories of this four-page matrix and the last category are "analytical." All other propositions are stated as they are argued by each Future's advocates. All statements are necessarily highly succinct.

	FUTURE 1	FUTURE 2	FUTURE 3	FUTURE 4
Concept of Security	U.S. security rests on our success in achieving superiority over our main adversary, the Soviet Union. Security is achieved by unilateral, not mutual, action.	The U.S. and the USSR have a strong common interest in preventing the nuclear war that could destroy them both. In other respects, we must try to outdistance them. Security is achieved partly by mutual, partly by unilateral, action.	Real security, including the prevention of nuclear war, cannot be achieved without a great improvement in superpower relations. To achieve this we would work together on specific problems that are common to both nations. Security is achieved largely by mutual action.	America's security would no longer be greatly affected by events elsewhere in the world. We would only defend North America. Therefore, Soviet actions would be much less important to us. Security is achieved by unilateral, not mutual, action.
Character of the Relationship	Is and must be a zero-sum game.	Can become positive-sum game in one major respect.	Can become substantially a positive-sum game.	The entire game is not terribly important.
Idea of How a Nuclear War Might Occur	Nuclear war would be the result of Soviet aggression, and the ceaseless Soviet effort to expand their power.	Nuclear war would be the result of miscalculation and uncontrolled escalation in a crisis, or of an accident.	Nuclear war would fundamentally be the result of the tremendous hostility and fear between the two sides.	Nuclear war involving the U.S. would be the result of the U.S. being involved in too many dangerous places around the world.
Advanced Nuclear Weapons	Development of new weapons is essential, since we have to keep ahead of the Soviets in all military areas.	Development of new weapons would be halted by verifiable agreements between the superpowers.	We would maintain and develop sufficient weapons to deter nuclear attack on us or our allies, only for as long as necessary.	We would maintain a nuclear force strong enough to deter any nuclear weapon attack only on North America, developing new weapons as needed.
Defense Against Soviet Missiles	Missile defenses would be vigorously pursued, no matter what the Soviets say or do, and deployed as soon as feasible.	Missile defenses would be regarded as an important bargaining chip in arms control negotiations (unless the Soviets agree to limited defenses on both sides).	Same as Future 2	Same as Future 1
Arms Control Negotiations	Agreements would be made only if the U.S. does not give up anything needed to achieve superiority, and only if we can be sure of no Soviet cheating.	We would press for drastic cuts in both sides' nuclear arsenals, on a basis of strict mutual verification and on-site inspection.	Improved relations will facilitate nuclear arms cuts, so our first priority must be to achieve a less hostile relationship.	Arms control is not terribly important. We would pursue such negotiations only to reduce the number of offensive Soviet weapons, allowing us to reduce the number we need to deter Soviet attack.

A Comparative Analysis of the Futures (cont'd)

FUTURE 1	FUTURE 2	FUTURE 3	FUTURE 4
Use of Nuclear Weapons			
We would continue to threaten first use of nuclear weapons (as we have for decades), if necessary, to stop Soviet non-nuclear aggression in Europe, Korea and elsewhere.	We would gradually reduce our reliance on the threat of using nuclear weapons to deter a Soviet non-nuclear attack on our allies.	By reducing tensions, we would reduce the real risk of war, thus reducing our need to threaten to use nuclear weapons.	By withdrawing our overseas commitments, we would no longer need to threaten the first use of nuclear weapons.
Our Allies			
We would maintain and improve our strong alliances and keep American troops and nuclear weapons in Europe, South Korea, and elsewhere.	We would maintain strong alliances, while seeking agreed arms reductions with the Soviets, both nuclear and conventional.	We would maintain our alliances for the time being, but they would lose their importance as East-West hostility declines.	We would phase out all our alliances except Canada and Mexico. Our former allies would arrange for their own security, which could mean forming their own alliance or accommodating to Moscow.
Military Intervention Abroad			
We would intervene militarily where American interests are at stake, when we are able to apply enough forces to succeed at acceptable costs.	Both sides would not intervene and work for stability wherever there is risk of escalation to nuclear war, but continue to back their friends in Third World countries where there is no such risk.	Reduced U.S.-Soviet hostility will lead to a greater degree of tolerance towards "unfriendly" governments, and more efforts, separately or jointly, to resolve conflicts peacefully.	We would not intervene anywhere against Marxist governments or movements unless they directly threaten North America.
Central America and Cuba			
We would strongly oppose all Soviet-oriented regimes, for example by backing the Nicaraguan rebels. Cuba would continue under boycott.	We would continue to oppose, and the Soviets to promote, Marxist regimes, except where such actions could lead to U.S.-Soviet confrontation.	We would seek businesslike, non-ideological relations with all nations, including Cuba and Nicaragua, so long as they do the same.	The U.S. would leave Nicaragua and Cuba alone, unless they do things that threaten our own security.
Human Rights			
Soviet tyranny is a major evil. We would not only deplore it, but refuse to deal with the Soviets on other issues until they yield on this one.	We would press the Soviets on human rights, but not to the point of obstructing progress in reducing the nuclear threat.	Improving relations with the United States would give the Soviets a growing stake in improved human rights practices.	We would denounce Soviet repression as an affront to our principles but would take no concrete steps. Because we would not be allied to dictators overseas, our championing of human rights would be principled and consistent.
Economic Consequences			
Costs will be considerable, and are likely to mean some increase in taxes and/or decrease in domestic Federal spending. (But advocates say it would be enormously more costly to let the Soviets come to dominate the world.)	Costs are uncertain. If a buildup in conventional forces is needed, costs could be somewhat higher that in the 1980s (but not as high as in Future 1). If the two sides agree to reduce conventional forces, costs will be lower than in the 1980s.	Costs will decline, although the speed of decline is uncertain as it depends on declining hostility. Advocates say long-term savings will be huge. Critics say our playing into the Soviet hands will necessitate an enormous military build-up later.	Costs are uncertain. Withdrawing our foreign commitments would mean very great savings. But much of this could be eaten up by a large-scale program to defend against ballistic and cruise missiles.

NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Dr. Harold M. Agnew
Former Chief Executive Officer, GA Technologies
Member, White House Science Council

Professor Madeleine Albright
School of Foreign Service
Georgetown University

Dr. Lew Allen, Jr.
Director, Jet Propulsion Laboratory
California Institute of Technology

Professor Graham T. Allison
Dean, John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

Vice Admiral John A. Baldwin
President, Naval War College

His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Bernardin
Archbishop of Chicago

Professor Seweryn Bialer
Director, Research Institute on International Change
Columbia University

Dr. Ernest Boyer
Former U.S. Commissioner of Education
President, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Mr. Lawrence E. Bruce, Jr.
President, U.S. Committee for UNICEF

Professor McGeorge Bundy
Former Special Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Department of History, New York University

Mr. Willard C. Butcher
Chairman, The Chase Manhattan Bank

National Council

Mr. Louis W. Cabot
Chairman, Cabot Corporation

Mr. Philip Caldwell
Senior Managing Director, Shearson Lehman Brothers

Ms. Antonia Handler Chayes
Former Under Secretary of the Air Force
Chairman, Endispute

The Honorable Warren Christopher
Former Deputy Secretary of State
O'Melveny and Myers

The Honorable Henry Cisneros
Mayor of San Antonio

The Honorable Harlan Cleveland
Former U.S. Ambassador to NATO
Dean, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs
University of Minnesota

The Honorable Clark M. Clifford
Former Secretary of Defense
Clifford and Warnke

The Honorable William Colby
Former Director of Central Intelligence
Colby, Bailey, and Associates

The Honorable Martha Layne Collins
Governor of the State of Kentucky

Mr. Edward H. Crane
President, Cato Institute

Ms. Mary Dent Crisp
Former Co-Chair, Republican National Committee
Senior Advisor, Business Executives for National Security

Dr. Lynn E. Davis
Former Deputy to the Under Secretary of Defense
Director of Studies, International Institute
for Strategic Studies

National Council

Mr. William M. Detweiler
Chairman, Foreign Relations Commission
The American Legion

*The Honorable Douglas Dillon
Former Secretary of the Treasury
Brunt & Company

Ms. Mary Anne Dolan
Journalist
The Los Angeles Herald-Examiner

Professor Paul Doty
Center for Science and International Affairs
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

Father Robert F. Drinan
Former Member of Congress
Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center

The Honorable Lawrence S. Eagleburger
Former Under Secretary of State
President, Kissinger Associates

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Former Mayor of San Francisco

Ms. Randall Forsberg
Executive Director, Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies

The Honorable Henry H. Fowler
Former Secretary of the Treasury

Dr. Marvin Goldberger
Director, Institute for Advanced Study

The Honorable Arthur A. Hartman
Former U.S. Ambassador to the U.S.S.R.

Mr. Andrew Heiskell
Former Chairman of the Board, TIME Incorporated

The Honorable Richard Helms
Former Director, Central Intelligence Agency
President, Safeer Company

The Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh
President Emeritus, University of Notre Dame

Mr. Arnold L. Horelick
Director, RAND/UCLA Program in Soviet International Behavior
RAND Corporation

Dr. Matina Horner
President, Radcliffe College

The Honorable William H. Hudnut, III
Mayor of Indianapolis

Professor Samuel P. Huntington
Director, Center for International Affairs
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

*The Honorable William J. Hyland
Former Deputy Special Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Editor, Foreign Affairs

Admiral B. R. Inman
Former Director, National Security Agency

General David C. Jones
Former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

*The Honorable Amos A. Jordan
Former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
President and Chief Executive Officer
Center for Strategic and International Studies

Professor Barbara Jordan
Former Member of Congress
Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs
The University of Texas at Austin

The Honorable George F. Kennan
Former U.S. Ambassador to the U.S.S.R.
The Institute for Advanced Study

The Honorable Juanita Kreps
Former Secretary of Commerce
Professor of Economics, Duke University

National Council

Admiral Gene R. La Rocque
Director, Center for Defense Information

Lt. General Richard D. Lawrence, U.S. Army (ret.)
Former President, National Defense University
Cambridge International

Ms. Flora Lewis
Foreign News Columnist
The New York Times

*Dr. Walter E. Massey
Vice President for Research
and for Argonne National Laboratory
The University of Chicago

*The Honorable David Mathews
Former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare
President, Charles F. Kettering Foundation

*The Honorable Charles McC. Mathias
Former Senator, State of Maryland
Jones, Day, Reavis & Pogue

The Honorable David E. McGiffert
Former Assistant Secretary of Defense
Covington & Burling

The Honorable Donald McHenry
Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations
Georgetown University School of Foreign Service

The Honorable Robert S. McNamara
Former Secretary of Defense

*General Edward C. Meyer
Former Army Chief of Staff

The Honorable Patsy T. Mink
Former Member of Congress
Honolulu City Council

Ms. Nancy M. Neuman
Chair, League of Women Voters

Professor Joseph S. Nye, Jr.
Former Deputy to the Under Secretary of State
Director, Center for Science and International Affairs
John F. Kennedy School of Government

Professor Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr.
President, Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis

Dr. Sally K. Ride
National Aeronautics and Space Administration

*Dr. Alice M. Rivlin
Director, Economic Studies Program
The Brookings Institution

The Honorable George Romney
Former Governor of the State of Michigan

Professor Eugene V. Rostow
Former Director, U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
Distinguished Visiting Professor of Law and Diplomacy
National Defense University

Mr. William M. Roth
President, Roth Properties

Mr. John Sawhill
Director, McKinsey & Company

Professor Robert Scalapino
Department of Political Science
University of California at Berkeley

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
President, Union of American Hebrew Congregations

Dr. William Schneider
Resident Fellow, American Enterprise Institute
for Public Policy Research

Mr. Bernard L. Schwartz
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Loral Corporation

Mr. Albert Shanker
President, American Federation of Teachers

National Council

Dr. John R. Silber
President, Boston University

The Honorable William E. Simon
Former Secretary of the Treasury

Mr. Walter Slocombe
Former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
Caplin & Drysdale

The Honorable Gerard C. Smith
Former Director, U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
President, The Consultants International Group

Major General Perry M. Smith, U.S.A.F. (ret.)
Former Commandant, National War College

The Honorable Helmut Sonnenfeldt
Former Counselor to the Secretary of State
Guest Scholar, Foreign Policy Studies

Mr. Edson W. Spencer
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Honeywell

Mr. Kenneth A. Steadman
Director, National Security and Foreign Affairs
Veterans of Foreign Wars

*Dr. Howard R. Swearer (Chairman, Executive Committee)
President, Brown University

Mr. Robert Teeter
President, Market Opinion Research

Dr. Lewis Thomas
President Emeritus, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center

The Honorable Richard Thornburgh
Former Governor of the State of Pennsylvania

Major General Harold W. Todd
Commandant
Air War College
Air University

Professor Robert W. Tucker
School of Advanced International Studies
The Johns Hopkins University

Admiral Stansfield Turner
Former Director, Central Intelligence Agency

Professor Adam B. Ulam
Director, Russian Research Center
Harvard University

*The Honorable Cyrus R. Vance
Former Secretary of State and Deputy Secretary of Defense
Chairman, The Public Agenda Foundation
Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett

Dr. Frank E. Vandiver
President, Texas A&M University

General Wilma L. Vaught, U.S.A.F. (ret.)
Advisor, The Jane Addams Conference
on Security in the Nuclear Age

The Honorable Arlene Violet
Former Attorney General of the State of Rhode Island

Ms. Jane Wales
Director, The Security Options Project

The Honorable Paul C. Warnke
Former Director, U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
Clifford and Warnke

*The Honorable Thomas J. Watson, Jr.
Former U.S. Ambassador to the U.S.S.R.
Chairman Emeritus, IBM Corporation

Mr. Fred Wertheimer
President, Common Cause

Mr. Tom Wicker
Political Columnist
The New York Times

The Honorable R. James Woolsey
Former Under Secretary of the Navy
Shea & Gardner

National Council

*Mr. Daniel Yankelovich
President, The Public Agenda Foundation
Chairman, The Daniel Yankelovich Group, Inc.

The Honorable Coleman Young
Mayor of Detroit

*Executive Committee member

THE PUBLIC, THE SOVIETS, AND NUCLEAR ARMS:
PUBLIC SUMMIT '88

PUBLICATIONS

The Public, The Soviets, and Nuclear Arms: An Information Kit (1987). Describes the multi-year joint effort of Public Agenda and Brown University's Center for Foreign Policy Development to explore and enhance the public's role in development of the country's long term policies for nuclear arms and U.S. Soviet relations. Includes information about Public Summit '88, a citizen information campaign conducted in cooperation with local television and newspapers in four cities in January 1988. Single copies available free of charge.

The Public, The Soviets, and Nuclear Arms: A Perspective from Community Leaders (1987). Report on a series of workshops held with community leaders in ten cities examining issues such as deterrence, the Strategic Defense Initiative, and the spread of Marxism in the Third World. Conducted as part of the joint project between Public Agenda and Brown University's Center for Foreign Policy Development. 62pp. Price: $10.00.

Voter Options on Nuclear Arms Policy: A Briefing Book for the 1984 Elections (1984). Part of the joint project between Public Agenda and Brown University's Center for Foreign Policy Development. Report based on a 1984 indepth study of Americans' views about nuclear arms, the Soviets, arms control, and communism in the Third World, and an analysis of opinion data on these issues since 1945. Outlines areas of consensus and confusion among Americans and contrast public opinion, elite views and existing policy options. 90pp. Price: $6.00. Technical Appendix: $10.00.

U.S.-Soviet Relations in the Year 2010: Americans Look to the Future (1988). Final report on a research study of nearly one thousand citizens on the future of U.S.-Soviet relations, conducted jointly by the Public Agenda Foundation and the Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University. 120pp. Price $10.00. Technical Appendix: Forthcoming. Also available, summary ballot results from Public Summit '88, the joint citizen information campaign of Public Agenda and the Center for Foreign Policy Development, and conducted in cooperation with local television stations and newspapers in four cities across the country. Price: $5.50.